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The American Church Quarterly

A Theological Review

Vol. I

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Editorial

Liberalism and Modernism

The word "liberal" has a noble and distinguished lineage. *Liberalis* in classical Latin means that which is proper to a free man; hence it implies the free man's peculiar characteristics, honour, nobility, and generosity. Later we have the mediæval term *artes liberales* which connotes the free man's intellectual pursuits, roughly the humanities and the sciences. The political use of the term is derived from mediæval social thought, which insisted strongly on the rule of law and on the conception of society as necessarily involving a legal constitution or "polity." "Liberal" thus indicates certain basic attitudes and values rather than specific doctrines. It is a far profounder term than democracy. The idea of liberalism is older than democracy and must be carefully distinguished from it. Its essence is to regard all men as free in both the classical and mediæval sense. In England, for example, all men were free, at least in legal theory, long before they were privileged to vote. The experience of the last century or so has shown, however, that where liberal attitudes have hardened into secular liberal doctrines an allegedly "scientific" view of man has been adopted with the result that the essentially liberal attitudes have been abandoned, and the values which they sought to protect seriously threatened. Too often what supposed itself to be free or liberal thought has espoused crudely Darwinian, Freudian, or even Marxist concepts of man, reducing him either to the status of a highly evolved animal, more adaptable than others to a wider range of environmental challenges, or to a bundle of irrational complexes, or to merely "economic man." But whichever of these three alternatives we choose, man has clearly ceased to be liberal man. The essential basis of liberal thought is the belief that man is rational, free and responsible; the central contention of liberal politics is that such

a being must be treated in a manner that befits his nature and justly honours his dignity.

Liberalism or Modernism?

Perhaps the great mistake of modern liberal thought has been to confuse liberalism with modernism. Liberalism is essentially a classical and Christian idea, and not modern at all.

"Modernism" as such seems to have arisen during the eighteenth century. Hitherto antiquity had been glorified. The sixteenth century Renaissance was not "modernistic"; on the contrary, it idealized classical literature, even, at times, to the point of absurdity. Where the Renaissance was hostile to Christianity, the latter was regarded as a modern degeneration, which had reduced ancient civilization to barbarism. It was that most self-confident of eras, the eighteenth century *Aufklärung*, which introduced the cult of modernity. Here the modern enlightenment was viewed either religiously, as a kind of new revelation from God, or irreligiously as an advance beyond outworn superstitions. It is worth noting that Gibbon combined both the Renaissance and the eighteenth century points of view in an ingenious fashion of his own. For him the Antonine era was the zenith of ancient civilization, a great cultural synthesis which Christianity had destroyed. "I have described," he tells us in the concluding chapter of his great work, "the triumph of barbarism and religion." However, in the new enlightenment of his own age he discerned a return to the Antonine glories. Henceforward civilization was both forewarned and forearmed against the power of religion, and was not likely again to succumb.

Thus to speak of theological "liberalism" is really a misnomer. "Modernism" is the more appropriate term, since, in all its many forms, it is an attempt to re-design Christianity so as to fit the prejudice and preconceptions of a self-consciously modern age. Its motives, no doubt, are in many ways good ones. The modernistic "liberal" theologian is essentially concerned with apologetics. His aim is to communicate afresh the essentials of Christianity in terms acceptable to modern culture. Thus he is concerned, in particular, to keep abreast of scientific developments, historical criticism, and new movements in philosophy.

Here he meets with two major difficulties:

1) Can we validly distinguish between essentials and non-essentials in Christianity? Is there some abstractly definable "essence of Christianity" which can be re-expressed in a totally new set of intellectual terms every

generation or so? To suppose that these questions can be answered in the affirmative is to do less than justice to the organic wholeness and logical coherence of the Christian Faith.

The so-called modernity which is counterpoised against Christianity, as though the contemporary was necessarily the antithesis of the ancient, can claim no such coherence or unity. Within Christianity we can only distinguish between essential and non-essential on a highly subjective basis. In and for objective Christianity itself all is essential, for all is of God. To use the phraseology of the late Fr. Lionel Thornton, revelation neither transcends the environment nor is it the product of the environment, rather revelation masters its environment (i.e. so critically and discerningly uses the characteristic thought forms, knowledge and insight of succeeding ages as to employ each in turn in the interests of its own growing self-articulation and increasingly effective self-expression). From this point of view the task of Christian thought in this age as in every other, is to show how revelation can once again master its own particular environment. Christian thought must be active not so much in the reinterpretation of itself as in the reinterpretation of the intellectual environment in which it now finds itself. Thus what is required is not so much a "liberal" Catholicism which assimilates itself to the environment, as a prophetic Catholicism which assimilates the environment to itself.

2) The second major difficulty for modernism is that by now our split and multiform culture contains no one strand of modern thought which has gained general acceptance. The present intellectual scene is an animated debate in which we demonstrate our modernity not by agreeing with any of the debaters in particular, but rather by showing our ability to play a critical and constructive "cross-bench" part in aid of the debate itself. In this sense good Catholic thinkers who are keenly aware of the intellectual problems and perplexities of our time, such as Jacques Maritain, Marcel, or Mascall are just as modern as Bertrand Russell or A. J. Ayer.

Modernism has been especially influenced by the dramatic development and the immense prestige of the natural sciences in the last few centuries of our culture. It has been influenced to an equal degree by the development of historical criticism, particularly the historical criticism of the Scriptures, and, perhaps above all, by changes in philosophical thought.

The Natural Sciences

The growing volume of new scientific discoveries following upon the work of pioneers such as Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, lent color to

the belief that men had now entered a new intellectual era. This occasioned the revival of ancient materialistic philosophies, though it certainly did not necessitate them. Materialism belongs to the childhood of philosophy—as we can see in the very earliest Greek philosophers—but it is out of place during its adult life. Classical Christian thought had been equipped with the categories which could have handled the problems occasioned by the rise of the new science, but the upheaval of the Reformation had caused such a dislocation in the continuity of Christian thought, that it was no longer sufficiently adventurous or aware of its own genius to make use of these categories. With its stress on revelation Christian philosophy from St. Augustine onwards had already perceived that the speculative potentialities of the human intellect, given so great a license by so many brands of philosophy, must always be disciplined by reference to experience and fact. In its way revelationism in theology is the counterpart of empiricism in philosophy. This had largely been forgotten, hence the series of battles fought between theologians who were philosophically muddled and the champions of each new science in turn, who were themselves often philosophically incompetent and tended to improvise philosophies on the basis of their favorite scientific theories. The real sufferer in this tawdry debate would seem to be neither science crudely championed nor theology feebly represented, but philosophy. It is small wonder that many a theologian capitulated before the self-confident representatives of science to an uncriticised scienticism in philosophy, and sought to give an account of Christianity in which the supernatural was minimized or even totally excluded. Thus, miracles of healing and exorcism, being of a primarily mental or moral nature, might be retained, while the so-called “nature miracles” were sacrificed to current prejudices. Here, however, the biologist and psychologist have as much right as the physicist to the claim that they are dealing with nature, and may claim an equal immunity from miraculous interference. Nature is more than merely the subject matter of physics.

Biblical Criticism

The preoccupation of “liberal” theology with the historical criticism of the Scriptures stems very largely from nineteenth century Germany and oddly enough it represents a philosophical movement quite as much as a historical one. Actually the beginning of the so-called “higher criticism” of the Scriptures can be traced among late seventeenth century and eighteenth century French Roman Catholics, but early in the nineteenth

century historicism found its home in the new romantic Germany and there it established a close and intimate relationship with post-Kantian German philosophy, particularly that of Hegel. Hegel developed a philosophy of history according to which the event might indeed bear the burden of the idea initially, suggesting and communicating the idea to the human mind, but once the philosophical intellect had disentangled the idea from the event or alleged event which had first prompted it, thus liberating the idea by turning it into a "pure" self-authenticating idea, the event could then be cast aside as more or less useless. Thus the task of philosophical theology was to release Christianity from an embarrassing entanglement in events or alleged events and to rediscover it as a set of pure self-authenticating ideas. This becomes clear in the famous *Leben Jesu* of Strauss which in its first edition was an avowedly Hegelian work. Hegelianism can be seen also exercising a tremendous influence on the biblical scholarship of the once famous Tübingen school. This new theological movement quickly found the new tools of criticism useful in its attempt to develop a purely philosophical account of the Bible and Christianity, and thus began that great Hegelian reconstruction of the Old Testament as a kind of history of the development of Hebrew religious ideas which was brought to full flower by Julius Wellhausen. Similar work was done on the New Testament by F. C. Baur and his followers. It must be admitted, however, that the results achieved by these Hegelian biblical critics were spectacular, and though much of their work stands in need of drastic revision, much of it also will survive as a permanent achievement of scholarship.

The climax of this is perhaps to be seen in the monumental work of Adolf von Harnack, renowned both as a biblical critic and as a historian of doctrine. He it was who gave classical shape to the theory of a simple, humanitarian, primitive ethic of Jesus which was progressively perverted as the movement which He inaugurated suffered from "acute Hellenization" and became the complex system of Catholic doctrine. Curiously enough, while he denounced this alleged Hellenistic perversion of the Christian faith, he could see no reason for the retention of the Old Testament, and in effect revived the ancient Marcionite heresy.

This presentation of Christianity was attacked from two sides. On the one hand the brilliant young Strasbourg scholar, Albert Schweitzer, portrayed the Jesus of history not as a gentle humanitarian but as a fiery apocalyptic Messiah who mistakenly supposed that the end of all earthly things was at hand. On the other hand, a Catholic "modernist" movement

had been gathering strength, particularly in France, led by the Abbé Loisy. The latter contributed a brilliant presentation of his own, but in his turn, while he defended the Catholic idea (i.e. the traditions of Catholic piety plus the institutions of the earthly Catholic Church), he did so in a thoroughly Hegelian manner, divorcing Catholicism from any roots in history and presenting it as pure, self-authenticating idea. We can understand the severe repressive methods with which Rome reacted to this movement, while on the other hand sympathizing with the victims of the repression, many of whom were by no means so extreme as Loisy himself.

By a curious irony of theological history, the movement which was driven underground or suppressed in the Roman Communion reappeared within Anglicanism, where it gained a considerable following among Anglo-Catholics and exercised a formative influence over some of the contributions to *Essays Catholic and Critical*.

Neo-Orthodoxy and its Successors

"Liberal" theology has continued to produce a variety of new off-shoots, despite the severe setbacks it received after the first World War and from that revival of orthodox Protestantism, which is associated with the name of Karl Barth. A somewhat mitigated form of this has become fashionable in North America under the title of Neo-Orthodoxy, of which Reinhold Niebuhr is perhaps the best known representative. Neo-Orthodoxy combines some of the insights of the revived classical Protestantism, particularly in the field of the doctrine of man, with many of the basic theological attitudes of liberalism. The orthodoxy of Neo-Orthodoxy is not Catholic orthodoxy. It is certainly not a return to the patristic Christology or Trinitarian theology. On the contrary it is a movement back to the somewhat gloomy and pessimistic anthropology which the great reformers derived from their rather one-sided interpretation of St. Augustine. Contemporary modernism has for its predominant figure Rudolph Bultmann, a veteran German New Testament scholar, who, during the latter years of World War II elaborated his famous "demythologization" of Christianity, professing to free the Christian faith from the mythological forms with which the Scriptures have encrusted it, and re-expressing it in one particular set of modern terms, those favoured by Martin Heidegger in his elaborate "phenomenological" version of existentialist philosophy.

Anglican Modernism

"Liberal" theology, though there were a few approximations in that direction during the seventeenth century, really penetrated Anglicanism

during the eighteenth century. The Latitudinarians of that era were the first true English "liberals." Most of them, being characteristic representatives of their age were inclined towards deism, and were religious philosophers rather than genuine theologians. In the nineteenth century the Latitudinarians were at first overwhelmed by the Evangelical and Catholic movements, but liberalism re-emerged in some, although not in all, of the Victorian Broad Churchmen. With the Darwinian crisis, and particularly with the publication of *Essays and Reviews* in 1860, it reestablished itself as a significant and growing movement among Anglicans, and in England it is now represented by the Modern Churchmen's Union. The existence of "liberalism" within Anglican ranks poses for us a peculiar problem. The Anglican experiment, if it may be so called, has been an attempt to contain the Reformation protest and a loyal, churchly, evangelical faith within the context of the historic and continuing institutions of Catholicism. The extension of this kind of toleration to "liberal" thought and religion was not at first foreseen, and it places us in something of a predicament. The challenge of "liberalism" is aimed at both Catholicism and Evangelicalism, since modernistic Christianity is certainly neither evangelical nor Catholic. One of the worst consequences for Anglicanism in the recent past has been the virtual disappearance of the great Evangelical party. For a while the term Evangelical became for all practical purposes, as often it still is in America, a mere synonym for anti-catholic, so that the "liberals" were taken to be, and often mistook themselves for, a new species of Evangelical, and the genuine Evangelicals allowed the "liberals" to assume the lead in the anti-catholic struggle. Now, however, there are some signs, more notable in England than in the United States, of a revival of genuine Evangelicalism which knows itself to be closer in spirit to the Catholics than to the "liberals," so that the day of the dissolution of the unnatural alliance between the Evangelicals and the "liberals" has drawn near.

Anglican "Liberalism" in America

Anglican liberalism has been particularly influential in the American Episcopal Church, perhaps because it emerged as an independent Province of the Anglican Communion at the end of the eighteenth century. The prevalence of Latitudinarianism at that time is vividly exemplified by the ill-fated Prayer Book of 1785, which has left its marks on subsequent American Prayer Books, e.g. in the dropping of the Athanasian Creed and by the provision of an alternative form for the ordination of priests.

American Anglicanism has always been a minority in a vast sea of disparate versions of Protestantism in which very often the only alternatives have been either theological "liberalism" or biblical fundamentalism. The vogue of "liberalism" in American Protestant circles is largely due, in the first instance, to the rise of Unitarianism shortly after the Revolutionary War. Despite their small numbers Unitarians have continued to enjoy a considerable intellectual prestige, particularly in New England, linked as they have been with the academic authority of Harvard University, with literary movements such as Transcendentalism, and beneficent social movements such as Abolitionism. It may fairly be claimed that for a long time members of the Unitarian denomination have been many times outnumbered by those who in the larger Protestant groups were in fact Unitarians without knowing it. More recently the large and prosperous Jewish community, with its parallel tendencies in Reform Judaism, has had a similar influence, particularly through thinkers such as Martin Buber.

Thus in America anyone who is not a thorough going "liberal" is likely to be labelled some sort of fundamentalist, and *vice versa*. True Catholic theology is a kind of mean between two extremes. In its rationalism it can recognize the genuine motives and concerns of the liberals, while in its concern to maintain the integrity of Apostolic Faith it can also sympathize with the passionate protest of the Fundamentalist, even while it rejects any irrational bibliolatry. Yet, while Catholicism is both unalterably firm in its attachment to the fundamentals and intellectually liberal at the same time, it is nevertheless neither "liberal" nor Fundamentalist. As so often happens in Catholic history, the way of orthodoxy is a mean between two extremes. The so-called *via media* is not an Anglican improvisation, rather it is the genius of Catholicism. The currency of this false antithesis between "liberalism" and fundamentalism in American Anglicanism makes for the misinterpretation and evasion of the particular witness of Catholic theology.

There is also grave danger in America of the development of an anti-intellectualism in religion, corresponding to many anti-intellectual currents in the secular culture. This would accept the "liberal" self-evaluation as being above all the embodiment of intellectualism in religion, while insisting that there are other elements in religion of which this excessively intellectual approach loses sight. Thus many of the Fundamentalist and Neo-fundamentalist reactions against current "liberalism" are gravely tainted with this kind of anti-intellectualism, indeed some Catholics hardly escape it. The true Catholic criticism of "liberalism" is, on the contrary, that the "liberals" are not intellectual enough, and that in particular they tend to

be too uncritical of contemporary secular thought, too uncritical of movements in philosophy inspired primarily by science, too uncritical of the contemporary vogue of reductionist psychology, too uncritical of the limitations of a merely historical approach to the Scriptures, indeed in general altogether too uncritical of the modern world in which we find ourselves to be worthy to stand in the tradition of the great Hebrew prophets or of the genuinely liberal thought of the classical Christian philosophers.

Popular Expressions of Modernism

Perhaps the two most important books to exemplify in brief and popular form this "liberal" approach, with all its defects, important because semi-authoritative to so many people, are *Doctrine in the Church of England* (1938) and *The Faith of the Church* by Pike and Pittenger (1951). The former is mainly a factual account of what was being taught within the Church of England by different groups or schools of thought during the period between the two World Wars. As such it neither has, nor, to do it justice, does it claim to possess, any authority whatsoever. While it does its job competently enough in most cases it is hardly an exciting compilation. Not only have there been important theological movements since its composition, which it naturally failed to notice; it also omits to take account of lively theological trends which were current while it was being composed. Even the chairman of the committee responsible for writing it, the late Archbishop Temple, acknowledged its amateurishness and drew attention to its many defects. It may fairly be said that this book was dated by the time it appeared in print and that any attempts at this time to treat it as anything more than a tombstone over an inglorious era in Anglican theology can scarcely be judged as anything but extremely ill advised. Such experiments in theological necromancy are hardly to be commended.

The Pike-Pittenger book, because of the celebrity of its authors and its inclusion in an excellent series sponsored by the National Council of the American Church, looks more authoritative to the general reader. It is in many ways greatly inferior to the English compilation and is without doubt the weakest member of the important series of which it forms a part. It ought therefore to be replaced as soon as possible by a new production drafted by firmer hands. Its much more recent date makes its wholesale ignoring of recent theological trends the less excusable. Not that its authors are in our view entirely without merit. Bishop Pike has more than once given firm utterance to that strong prophetic witness in social matters

which is all too rarely heard in the American Church, while Dr. Pittenger always displays a sincere concern for and appreciation of Christian piety. The Bishop, however, all too clearly represents the marked influence of Unitarianism and liberal Judaism upon American religious thought, and his amateurishness, even more marked in his recent public statements, in matters of theology ill becomes his penetrating mind and sensitive social conscience. Dr. Pittenger, on the whole, represents the "liberal" theology of the second and third decades of this century and manifests a Bourbon-like disinclination either to forget its characteristic shibboleths or to learn anything that lies beyond them. Here and there, however, he does flavour his work with touches of Bultmann who, despite his contemporary significance, is little more than a German Protestant version of Loisy, operating with an Existentialist philosophy and lacking the persuasiveness and literary charm of his predecessor. At any rate Pittenger shares with both Loisy and Bultmann a perverse tendency to try to immunize Christianity against historical criticism by lifting it out of its historical context.

The True Vocation of Christian Thought

What then is the true task of Christian thought in the modern world? Out of its concern for the fullness and integrity of the Apostolic faith and witness it must derive and clearly state a philosophy which, at one and the same time can function as a philosophy of science, as a philosophy of history and as a philosophy of existence in the existentialist sense. It is useless to have a philosophy capable of functioning as an interpreter of science, and of the success and prestige of the scientific method, if at the same time it is incapable of interpreting history or existence. Philosophy is concerned with interpreting the whole world of experience; it dare not be selective. Contemporary existentialism is gravely defective, since it is almost useless as a philosophy of science. It abstracts existence from concrete reality, set where it is in history and nature, and is therefore unable to give us more than an abstract account of it. Similarly a philosophy of religion which is no more than just that is useless also. Since life in the concrete is the totality of all its aspects, a concrete philosophy must be as capable of linking together in one scheme of thought the variety of experience as life and history are capable of holding that variety together in one stream of development.

Of course the Catholic thinker must do his homework. He must really know and experience at firsthand the richness of contemporary culture and the vitality of the intellectual life around us. He may very well be-

lieve that the so-called *philosophia perennis*, the great tradition of Catholic thought classically expounded in the greatest of the Fathers and the Scholastics, contains within itself the latent capacity to build up a philosophy as concrete as life as we experience it, and yet as subtle in its power of analysis as the most scrupulous rationalist can demand. Yet even so he cannot do his work merely by quoting from the writings of dead masters of Catholic thought. In every age and cultural epoch their work has to be done over and over again.

The Inspiration of the Intellect

Christendom is not only the sphere of revelation, it is also the sphere of inspiration. If the historical method means interpreting every human thing as though it were merely a human thing, if its slogan is always "Danger! Men at Work!" and never "Salvation! God at Work!" then the historical method not only lacks the categories to deal with Holy Scripture, it also lacks the categories even to tell the story of the development of Christian thought. The inspiration of a man is the supernatural intensification of what he naturally possesses. We may cite as examples the genuine poetic inspiration in the case of the authors of the Psalms, the inspiration of memory and common sense and the honest purposes to bear a faithful witness which we may find in a relatively ungifted man like the Evangelist St. Mark, and the intensification of philosophical and analytic power in men like Augustine and Aquinas. These last would have been great philosophers in any case, but it was the Holy Ghost Who made them great Christian philosophers. It is above all in great Christian philosophers that we meet today with men equipped with the critical power to discern between the permanent elements in the contemporary culture and the merely ephemeral and accidental ones, and so to enrich our sense of the variety and unity of the creation and of the magnificence of the philosophical tradition which must comprehend and expound it.

In other words the great tradition of Christian philosophy is a work of inspiration, of the Holy Ghost, as well as the creation of men. The Holy Ghost has not been absent from us for all these centuries suddenly to reappear in our time. The true *Aufklärung*, the real age of enlightenment, was the period of the Incarnation, which redeemed not only its own time but all time. Since then there has been no *Aufklärung*, indeed we have not needed one. It is from this great enlightenment of man by the Holy Ghost that all genuine liberalism springs. By contrast the inauthentic "liberalism" of the eighteenth century, surviving in untimely fashion as a hoary antique

into the twentieth century, cannot but appear to us as a gigantic irrelevance. The "liberalism" we know here in America in particular, and in the West in general, is a "liberalism" which is vividly aware of the forms of unbelief and the often degenerate philosophical idiosyncrasies in vogue among the decaying Western middle classes. Other problems of a much more momentous character (e.g. the challenge of Marxism and the rise of proletarian thought and culture, not merely beyond the Iron Curtain but also here in the West) it tends to ignore. Thus "liberalism" is an end-product of the declining age of middle class Christianity which begins perhaps with the Reformation. It ignores the great problems which now confront the West, a sure sign perhaps that in the great ordeals which lie before it the West itself will return the compliment. It will in turn ignore the "liberal" Christianity which, lacking any genuine gospel, has sought in vain to evangelize it. "Liberalism," in other words, is not merely intellectually brittle, defective and unconvincing, it is also historically irrelevant. It has appealed above all to the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the time, and it is above all the needs and spirit of a desperate time which indicate how absolutely and conclusively the Word of the Lord is against it.

Some Recent Christologies

• William H. Dunphy

The Christology of Professor W. N. Pittenger

One of the most recent developments in theology is a revived interest in Christology. Dr. Pittenger has given us a brilliant treatment of the subject in his latest book.¹ The book purports to be "written from the point of view of one who might be described as both a 'Catholic' and a 'modernist'" (p. xiv). The word Catholic is so loosely defined as to have little definite meaning. We might on the other hand be mildly surprised at St. Thomas Aquinas being described as a "modernist" (p. xv) were it not that we are by now quite inured to this sort of thing. But there are modernists and modernists. When Thomas found something in contemporary thought or in the teaching of his master, Aristotle, which conflicted (beyond possibility of reconciliation) with the Christian Faith, it was a bit of Aristotle or a bit of Averroes,

or a bit of contemporary thought, that he scrapped and not an article or two of the Christian Faith. Thomas's "modernism" differed *in toto* from most of those who in recent times have described themselves as "modernists."

Professor Pittenger makes four affirmations which he regards as absolutely integral to the life of the Christian Church. These are: (1) Jesus is truly human; (2) Christ is truly divine; (3) Jesus Christ is one person; (4) Jesus Christ is intimately related to the more general action, presence, and revelation of God in His world, and supremely in human history (pp. 11-14).

It is interesting to compare and contrast these with the basic decisions of the first four Ecumenical Councils, so often quoted or summarized by theologians. The full reality of the humanity of Jesus is clearly and abundantly set forth and emphasized. The language about Christ as "truly divine" is much more vague. That Jesus Christ is one person is either a platitude or a paradox. In traditional Christian thought we are confronted by the dynamic paradox that Jesus Christ and the eternal Word of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, are one Person. That very definitely is *not* what Dr. Pittenger is asking us to believe, here or later in the book.

On the contrary, we learn that "the meaning of 'one person' has been understood in various senses. One group of Christians has tended to say that this person is God living and acting humanly. Another has tended to say that this person is the Man in whom God lives and acts." Take your choice, is virtually what Professor Pittenger tells us, while indicating frankly

¹*The Word Incarnate*, W. Norman Pittenger, Nisbet, 1959.

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his preference for the second of these ways of phrasing it (pp. 12-13).

One might infer from what is said here and elsewhere that these "two ways of phrasing the fact" were equally valid, equally permissible in the Church. "The former style is more Alexandrine or Cyrillian, the latter more Antiochene or Nestorian (or better, more like the thought of Theodore of Mopsuestia) and we may believe that there will always be some who are of the former way of thinking and some who are of the latter" (p. 13).

The problem is wrongly stated. The first way of phrasing it, that "this person is God living and acting humanly," is one which, if rightly understood, has been held by the great majority of Christians of all ages, as implying the full Deity and the full humanity of the one Person, Jesus Christ, the eternal Word made flesh. The second statement, that "this person is the Man in whom God lives and acts," would as surely have been rejected by Christians of all the ages, unless balanced by other statements implying that this Man is also God. This is true of most of those who belong to the Antiochene school or way of thinking. The second statement by itself—not balanced by statements akin to the first—is characteristic not of the Antiochene School as a whole, but of the extreme members of that School, especially Theodore and Nestorius.² It is unhappily these that Professor Pittenger sets before us as models of Christological teaching—a teaching which has been condemned by the Church Catholic for fourteen centuries at least. And the second way of putting it does not secure the unity of person in Christ, as at once true Man, and the eternal Son or Word of God. It ap-

pears that Dr. Pittenger is in these early pages laying the ground work for the Christological teaching later developed in this book—teaching which is far more radical than that which the Church Catholic has condemned in the extremists of the Antiochene School. The fourth affirmation of Dr. Pittenger, that "Jesus Christ is intimately related to the more general action, presence, and revelation of God in his world and supremely in human history" is one which seems both welcome and inevitable to a Christian who believes that Jesus Christ is the eternal Word and Son of God made flesh. To such a one it is possible and imperative to hold both to the uniqueness of Christ and to the universality of His work as Logos. But in the setting of the very different conception of Christ favored by Dr. Pittenger—"the Man in whom God lives and acts"—the words may easily take on a quite different meaning, and lead to a denial of the utter uniqueness of Christ. They may be taken as implying that the difference between God's action or presence in Christ and God's action or presence in other men is simply one of degree—that the difference between Christ and other men is simply one of degree.³ The misgivings aroused by various phrases at the outset are only confirmed by the more fully developed argument of subsequent chapters of the book.

²Dr. Pittenger at times attempts to soften his repeated statements to the effect that the difference between Christ and other men, or the incarnation in Christ and in other men, is only a difference of degree. He says that a difference of degree may be "almost immeasurable" (p. 241). This does not really meet the difficulty. The difference between the spiritual capacity of a Buddha or a St. Theresa and of us ordinary mortals may be "almost immeasurable," although still only a difference of degree. But the difference between the most gifted spiritual genius—who is only a man—and the God-man is, if one really accepts the Incarnation, one of kind, not of degree. And the difference between Dr. Pittenger's doctrine of the Incarnation and that of the Christian Church is one of kind, not of degree.

³I am, of course, aware of the efforts to rehabilitate Theodore and Nestorius. Their orthodoxy, however, can be maintained only by interpreting them in a sense quite different from that which Dr. Pittenger accepts and defends.

Great emphasis is rightly laid on the significance of the Christological question, and with it the fact that the Christian has to do with God apprehended in Jesus Christ and that Christianity has never been content to refer this apprehension simply to the Man Jesus. One notes with pleasure that the author refuses to shut himself or his readers up with the dilemma of the "Jesus of history" or the "Christ of faith," but that one is pointed to the fact of *Jesus Christ*, as the abiding center of Christian life and experience. The insistence on the wide bearings of soteriology—that salvation includes more than redemption from sin will be welcomed by Catholic-minded readers, as will be the stress on the abiding of the image of God even in fallen man, and the consequences of this abiding reality, and the constant work of the divine Logos undergirding human life in its historical situations, moving through nature and history, and consummating His work by seeking to bring His creation into union with Himself.

One can agree cheerfully with all of this, without taking necessarily the next step; in which we are told "this world then is an incarnational world" (p. 6), or accepting the author's attempt to bring in Cardinal Bérulle, the great French spiritual writer of the seventeenth century, in support of this position. Dr. Pittenger quotes him as saying that "the Incarnation is the manner and mode of all God's work in his world." This passage is not given in its context, nor is any reference given; but anyone familiar with Bérulle's teaching will know that he is as far as possible from teaching the diffused incarnation toward which Dr. Pittenger is leading us in the quotations he makes here and elsewhere from the distinguished Oratorian.

Most of us will agree with the warning against Docetic tendencies in a good deal of Christian thought, whether as to the

physical or psychological manhood of Jesus, though we may consider that Dr. Pittenger does considerably less than justice either to St. Athanasius or St. Cyril in this connection. He exhibits a tendency to find Docetism nearly everywhere in traditional thought. Nor will most of us find convincing the quotation from Professor John Knox that "we cannot think of him as *knowing* he was more than man without denying that he was man at all—that is, a truly sane man." Dr. E. L. Mascall has dealt with this type of argument in his work *Christ, the Christian and the Church*, (pp. 53ff, etc.).

Whether our Lord while on earth before the Crucifixion realized that He was more than man is a question on which devout and orthodox thinkers may differ, but to attempt to short-circuit the discussion by magisterial statements like this is not at all helpful for the elucidation of a delicate and complicated problem.

Dr. Pittenger makes it abundantly clear that he holds that the difference between the union of God and man in Jesus and the union of God and man in other men is only a difference of degree (p. 238, etc.). But he questions the statement that "the difference between the union of God and man in Jesus and the union of God and man elsewhere has been seen by Catholic theology generally as a difference of kind, not of degree." "For there have been some writers not yet condemned as heretical—Cardinal Bérulle, for example, whom we quoted on an earlier page, and Baron von Hugel—who have spoken of incarnation as the manner and mode by which God ever works in his creatures, and have implied thereby a difference of degree" (p. 238). It may be that Von Hugel, in his more modernistic phase, expressed himself in some such fashion, but of "Catholic theology generally" there can be no question. Bérulle's views on this—as on almost everything else—are at the opposite pole from the

author's. No passage in his works, taken in its context, supports the notion that the difference between the presence of God in Christ and His presence in other men was simply a difference of degree, quite the contrary (see, e.g., his *Discourses*, 5-9). Professor Pittenger must be hard up for support for his peculiar teaching when he has to look for it in an unbending Augustinian, who leans if anything too far in the opposite direction. He finds far more plausible and congenial support in the more radical Antiochene theologians of the late fourth and early fifth centuries.

Not all of the theologians of the School of Antioch took a position similar to that of Dr. Pittenger. The more moderate Antiochenes did not seem to find any great difficulty in holding together the conception of Christ as the only begotten Son of God, eternally one with the Father in Deity, as His Son and Word, and on the other hand one with us in manhood, with a true body and a truly human consciousness and experience—one and the same person being confessed in both relationships. Eustace, Chrysostom, John of Antioch, Theodoret and others come to mind. Only two or three even appear to belong to the extreme school—Diodore, whose work is represented only by fragments, which may not be representative of his total outlook—Theodore and Nestorius, the last two being condemned as heretics by Ecumenical Councils.

The Antiochene School

No summary of the teaching of the Antiochene School relative to the unity of the person of Christ can be considered adequate if it does not take full account of the "Symbol of Union" contained in the letter sent by John, Patriarch of Antioch, Nestorius' friend and defender, to Cyril of Alexandria. It consisted (except for the final sentence) of the formula, which the

Oriental Bishops—most of them friendly to Nestorius and opposed to the Alexandrian theology—had approved at their rival Council of Ephesus in 431 and sent to the Emperor, Theodosius the Younger, as representing their views.

"We confess then our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten (or unique) Son of God, perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and body; begotten as to His Godhead from the Father before [all] ages, but the same (*ton auton*) in the last days for us and for our salvation (born) of the Virgin Mary as to His manhood; the same (*ton auton*) consubstantial with the Father as regards His deity, but consubstantial with us as regards His humanity; for a union of two natures has taken place (*duo gar phuseon henosis gegone*). Therefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. By reason of this understanding of union without confusion we confess the Holy Virgin to be *Theotokos* [God-bearer], because God the Word took flesh and was made man, and from the very conception united the temple taken from her to Himself. As regards the evangelical and apostolical expressions about the Lord, we know that the theologians employ some in common, as of one person (*hos eph henos prosopon*) but distinguish others, as of two natures (*hos epi duo phuseon*), and apply those which are suitable to God to the deity of Christ, and the lowly ones to His manhood." (My translation.)

It must again be emphasized that this formula (except for the last sentence) was drafted in all probability by so typical an Antiochene as Theodoret, the staunch friend and champion of Nestorius, and was accepted by the Bishops of John of Antioch's party, while they still had the Emperor definitely on their side, and definitely hostile to Cyril and the Alexandrines in the summer of 431. The formula is far removed from the radical extremists of the Anti-

ochene School, and still further removed from Dr. Pittenger's teaching, which would as surely have incurred anathema from all the moderate Antiochenes as from the Alexandrians.

In fact it is doubtful whether Theodore of Mopsuestia or Nestorius would have tolerated such teaching within the limits of their episcopal or patriarchal jurisdiction. They might have been led to appreciate and welcome the safeguards which the theology of Alexandria—and even of Cappadocia—erected against such destructive tendencies.

The formula which the Antiochenes had drawn up as early as 431 thus recognized the title *Theotokos* (*God-bearer*) applied to the Blessed Virgin—it will be remembered that Nestorius' attack on this title was his declaration of war on what Alexandria, in common with most of the Church, believed—and excluded the tendency to think of two Sons, two persons (one human, one divine) in the incarnate Lord; it is acknowledged that the relation between the divine Word and the Christ is one of union, not simply association or conjunction, and that one and the same Person (*autos*) is the Eternal Word or Son and the Jesus whom men met in the flesh. "One Christ, one Son, one Lord" is definitely proclaimed against all divisive tendencies.

The fact that Cyril could and did accept this statement is proof that the difference between the moderate Antiochene and the moderate Alexandrian Schools had been exaggerated—as it still is by some modern authors—and that the differences were not irreconcilable where there was a sincere desire for reconciling the two.

The Virgin Birth

No intelligent discussion of Christology can omit the Virgin Birth, nor does Professor Pittenger leave out the question. Unfortunately his presentation is predominantly negative. The Virgin Birth, like the

Empty Tomb and the Ascension of Our Lord, is treated as a "legend" (pp. 40 ff.). In describing these "tales" as "legends," Dr. Pittenger generously concedes that "they may contain some elements of genuine history." "The disentangling of these elements is the work of genuine New Testament criticism." But they have their principal significance in that they enable us to see what in fact Christ had come to mean to those who believed in Him, and hence they are invaluable in their testimony both to His person and to His impact upon those who first believed upon Him. This is true of the nativity stories, the accounts of the empty tomb, and the Ascension, and it is also true of the stories of Pentecost, which bear their witness to the empowering and enlightening of those who had known Jesus, and had experienced the renewal of His presence and power after His ignominious crucifixion, death, and burial" (p. 41).

A number of things here call for examination. It is assumed apparently that the task of deciding what is and what is not the Faith is the responsibility of New Testament critics. That of course raises a difficulty in the case of the very early Church, which had no New Testament (in the sense of a book), and hence no New Testament critics. Despite this handicap, the very early Church, trusting in our Lord's promise and gift of the Holy Spirit, sorted out truths from falsehoods, certainties from uncertainties, and included the Virgin Birth among the certain truths revealed by God. It is significant that the account arose and was circulated in the most strictly Jewish circles of the Church (and therefore in the most Jewish parts of the New Testament) at a time when James and other members of Christ's family were "popping it" at Jerusalem, and carrying tremendous weight throughout the Jewish Christian world. The Spirit-guided Church accepted the factual truth of the Virgin Birth, as well as its

essential importance, and inserted it in the earliest creeds, and has continued to include it even in its briefest creeds ever since.

The Virgin Birth, which is vouched for by the Gospels and the Holy Catholic Church from the first century on, has other values besides that of indicating the impact of our Lord on those who first believed in Him, or their testimony as to His Person. There is the very important consideration that Mary's faith in the tremendous and staggering promise of God (that she, a virgin, should conceive and bear a child, and that Child the very Messiah and Son of God) is the human condition—the moral condition—of the Incarnation. Mary was no blind instrument of God, but a free agent. Faith (in the most crucial examples of it given both in the Old Testament and in the New), includes trust in God's ability to give life, where life seems impossible (e.g., the birth of Isaac, the sacrifice of Isaac, Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, and the resurrection of his nation, Mary's virginal conception, the Resurrection of our Lord from the empty tomb, our own spiritual resurrection in baptism, and the coming resurrection of the body). Such faith Mary had preëminently, conjoined with utter obedience and self-sacrifice—the willingness to endure suspicion as to her fidelity to her espoused bridegroom Joseph, and even the possibility of a painful and shameful death. Because of this faith, St. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, pronounced her "blessed among women," "blessed is she that believed, for there shall be a fulfillment of that which was promised her by the Lord." Because of this faith and obedience the Church from early times has hailed her as the "Second Eve," and has found in this faith and obedience—even more than in her physical bringing forth of God's Son—the source of her unique blessedness, and of the veneration given her by the Church Catholic and "all generations," as "higher

than the cherubim, more glorious than the seraphim,"—next to her Son, the God-man.

The question of authority is also involved. Catholic Christians—who make up more than two-thirds of the Christian world—believe that Christ founded (or refounded) a Church and gave her the Holy Spirit, with the assurance that He would guide her into all the truth. What the whole Church has constantly taught as a matter of faith to be steadfastly believed by all who would be in the way of salvation, has been taught with the sanction and authority of the indwelling, guiding, controlling Spirit. And surely the Virginal conception, the empty tomb, etc., are truths of such a character. The whole authority of Scripture and the Church is committed to them; and a Gospel which omits them is a mutilated Gospel. St. Paul praises his converts because when they received the word or message of God through him they received it not as the word of men, but the word of God (I Thess. 2:13). Nowhere in the New Testament are men supposed to ransack, analyze, and dissect the message of the Apostles and the Church, retaining what commends itself to them and discarding all that strikes them as untrue or non-essential. That has been the attitude of heretics of every generation, but the New Testament writers—particularly Paul and John—give them little aid and comfort. If an angel from heaven preaches a different Gospel, we are to hold him accursed, says St. Paul. The Epistles of John speak no more kindly. Dr. Pittenger would probably consider that they here "descended" to the level of "name-calling"—and so they do, and so, on occasion, does the Incarnate Truth Himself.

At times the author does exhibit some mild interest in the question of authority, though (unlike myth, symbol, legend, liberalism, etc.) it finds no place in the index and little in the text, but he is reassured by

the *Report of the Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England*, (London, SPCK 1938). He recognizes that it has no official authority in the English Church or the Anglican Communion, but thinks that "it describes the actual 'limits of belief' which are commonly accepted by those who call themselves Anglicans" (p. 71). This is a dubious assumption. In the English Baptismal Office, the candidate for baptism is asked: "Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? And in Jesus Christ his only-begotten Son our Lord? And that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," etc. The *Answer* is: "all this I stedfastly believe," which even Dr. Pittenger's ingenuity can scarcely convert into, "some of this I tentatively believe," or "until the prevailing winds of exegesis change." The Creed itself—in its historic sense and meaning—gives us the "limits of belief" which are "commonly accepted" and should be unanimously accepted by those who call themselves Anglicans."

Professor Pittenger seems to regret that there has "developed a tendency to insist on the necessary historicity of the virginal conception and the stories of the empty tomb" (p. 71), which he considers as "reversing a general agreement in most of the reformed communions that these were secondary to the Incarnation and Resurrection, and that their acceptance or non-acceptance was a matter for historical research in the light of the available data and the likelihood found in the 'analogies' which historical research employs."

Does anyone seriously suppose that this is the way in which the Apostles, or our Lord Himself, expected His disciples to learn what they must believe or do to be saved? Or that the Reformers, and in particular those who gave us the English Book of Common Prayer, would ever have remotely suggested this as the method by

which a man is to discover "the things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health"? I do not know in which "Reformed Communions" there has been such a general agreement as the author describes—certainly not in the Anglican Communion—not, that is, if "secondary" here means non-essential or optional.

No, the Church's insistence on candidates for baptism believing "all the articles of the Christian Faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed" (American Book of Common Prayer, pp. 276, 278) is scarcely satisfied with the acceptance of its statements as in part truths and facts, in part legends, which "may contain some elements of genuine history." No doubt the legends about Theseus and Hercules may contain some elements of genuine history, and the tale of the "Return of the Heraclidae" very probably does, but the affirmations of the Church's Creed are scarcely to be put on that level.

Professor Pittenger's argument that it is possible to believe in the Incarnation without believing in the Virgin Birth needs careful scrutiny. It is, of course, possible in the abstract. In the concrete, I am not sure. I have never met anyone who denied the Virgin Birth, who believed in the Incarnation in the sense in which the Church teaches it. There have been, both in ancient and in modern times, those who believed that the Word or Son of God came down at Baptism on Jesus or that Jesus at his Baptism or at some other time was uniquely filled with the Holy Spirit. That is not, of course, what the Holy Catholic Church means and has always meant by the Incarnation. And there are those who hold not that the Eternal Son and Word of God was born of Mary, that He lived and suffered and was tempted as Man, that He (God made man) died on the cross for us and rose again; but rather that the eternal Word united Himself very closely with the child Whom

Mary bore to Joseph, grew up, suffered and Who died, and Whose body rotted away in the tomb, but Who in some sense not too clear to me "rose again" and can be called victorious over death, and Who somehow can be worshipped along with the eternal Word, although He is not the same Person, —not the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, or "the second mode of God's eternal being and activity." This again is not the Church's doctrine of the Incarnation.

Dr. Pittenger himself seems to hold this second view, so far as I can discover after wading through many pages abounding in ambiguous or obscure phrases—strange in a writer who has such a gift for clear expression—multiple quotations, where it is always possible to say that one did not wish to make his own all the heretical phrases quoted or all their natural implications, and on the other hand perfectly orthodox passages, inconsistent with the main tenor of the book, where again it is always possible to argue either that the writer really believes this or simply that he was stating what the Church's faith is or was, or quoting from a "classical expression" of it.

One can say much for and against this ultra-Nestorian teaching—ultra-Nestorian in the sense that it goes *ultra-Nestorium*, that it is far more radical than anything that Nestorius meant to teach or did teach,—but one thing is crystal clear. It is not the Gospel. It is a perversion of it. It is not the Holy Catholic Faith, but a travesty of it. Whether this sort of teaching can be harmonized with modern thought—or certain aspects of it—is a matter of complete indifference except to the small number of people who hold this curious view.

But granted that there may be some—apparently Dr. Pittenger is not one of them—who really do believe in the Church's doctrine of the Incarnation without believing in the Virgin Birth, what of it? There

are others who believe in "the life everlasting" without believing in the resurrection of the body. But the Church's Faith includes both, and when we recite the Creed we confess both. There are men who can believe in God's love without believing in the Incarnation as a real event. Can we therefore dismiss the Incarnation, considered as a fact, and regard it as "secondary," "peripheral," non-essential? This type of reasoning can be carried far.

The Virginal Conception has its own value and importance, as we have seen. The same may be said of the Empty Tomb. It is difficult to see just what assurance we have that Christ has conquered death—or what meaning there is in saying that He has—if the tomb was not empty—if Christ did not rise triumphantly in the very body in which He was crucified. Christ did not simply survive death, He conquered it, shattered it, trampled it underfoot. The Empty Tomb guarantees this, and guarantees too that the appearances of the risen Lord were objectively real, and not subjective illusions. But what conquest of death is indicated if Christ's body rotted away in the tomb, even though He took another ("spiritual") body and appeared in this to His disciples? On this theory, the same thing happened to Him as happens to all men at death—according to most of those who hold this view. In what sense, then, did Christ conquer death, any more than Moses, or Socrates, or Buddha?

While granting Dr. Pittenger that religious language is largely dramatic, or even metaphorical and poetical, this does not mean that it excludes the possibility of stating facts as facts—statements which must then simply be affirmed or denied—but not accepted or explained away. To most Christians, it is clear that among such statements of fact are those that Christ was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," that He was "crucified under Pon-

tius Pilate," that "the third day he rose again from the dead." Professor Pittenger accepts the second of these in the literal sense of the words—which is here the Church's sense—but denies the other two in the sense in which the Church has always taught them. Poetry and metaphor are beside the point here—we are given Christian affirmations—central Christian affirmations, since they are stated in the shortest of the Church's Creeds—and they should be simply affirmed (in the Church's sense) or denied. There is no real parallel with "descended into hell," or "sitteth on the right hand of the Father," where necessarily a barely literal interpretation was never insisted on, or (in the case of the second) even tolerated by the Church.

There is much else that is disturbing in Dr. Pittenger's Christology, in particular the exposition of a diffused Incarnation, with Christ as the chief example and focal point of this. "*The incarnation* [italics Dr. Pittenger's] in Christ is of a piece with the manner and mode of God's working in his creatures. Cardinal Bérulle had a fine statement of this: 'The Incarnation is the condition, the work, and the mystery wherein God reigns, and whereby he reigns, in his creatures.' It is obvious that the great French saint is referring here to a wider action than the particular Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ: it is that wider action which gives its point to the particular Incarnation" (p. 124).

Now to anyone familiar with Bérulle's teaching it is not at all "obvious" that this is his point. Any suggestion of various incarnations or degrees of incarnation would have been utterly abhorrent to this saint. Had Professor Pittenger read carefully the context of this and other quotations from Bérulle—above all had he taken the trouble to acquire an elementary knowledge of Bérulle's teaching, he would not so utterly have misunderstood and misinterpreted him.

Bérulle is an extreme Augustinian—at the opposite pole from Dr. Pittenger. He emphasizes the utter vileness of human nature. As in Christ, the human is abased and so to speak "annihilated" before the divine, so it must be in us.

Bérulle would have abominated Dr. Pittenger's talk of "the rest of God's incarnating and revelatory activity" (p. 124), and would have considered the following sentence: "When Professor Bethune-Baker on one occasion declared that 'what is *ex hypothesi* potential in all men—that is, the complete union of the human and the divine—was actualized' in Christ, he stated the necessary precondition for any meaningful doctrine of Incarnation," as simple blasphemy (p. 124). A writer as sensitive as Professor Pittenger to being quoted allegedly out of context, should take greater pains to represent and not misrepresent, the teaching of those whom he quotes. The blurring of the difference between Christ and all other men, the reduction of that difference to a difference of degree, the proclamation of a potentiality in all men" to become what Christ was, is completely at variance with Bérulle's doctrine as it is with the doctrine of the whole Church, East and West, from the first.

The Trinity

The subject of the Incarnation is closely related, of course, to that of the Trinity. Here the author so one-sidedly emphasizes the unity as to imperil the real personal distinctions. Dr. Pittenger supports and clarifies his view of the Trinity by various quotations from Dean Rashdall. The most important of these (p. 226) has to do with the teaching of St. Augustine. The quotation is from what the author assures us is "a notable but little known paper" entitled "Trinitarian Doctrine from St. Athanasius to St. Thomas Aquinas." Dr. Pittenger tells us that "the author [Dr. Rashdall] has no

difficulty in showing that for St. Augustine 'the Son was not thought of as a distinct person from the Father in anything approaching the modern sense.' . . . Never does he compare the relations between the persons of the Trinity to the relations between two human beings or two members of any other species of conscious being. The Trinity is always likened to the relation between different activities of one and the same divine Mind. That God is one Mind (*una Mens*) is with him a fundamental truth."

This simply will not do. St. Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity is much fuller and much better balanced than Dr. Rashdall or Dr. Pittenger would lead us to suppose. The great theologian of Hippo was well aware of the limitations of human thought and language to express the truth of God's being and the relationships within that being. Accordingly he draws his metaphors and similes from various sources, some of them emphasizing the unity, others seeking to do justice to the plurality and distinction of the Persons.

It is true that the analogy from human consciousness is a favorite one with Augustine. But any patristic scholar will be amazed to learn that he "never compares the relations between the persons of the Trinity to the relations between two human beings." Such a statement is palpably absurd to anyone with even a moderate acquaintance with the writings of the great African doctor, and makes Dr. Rashdall a very unsafe guide for Dr. Pittenger's readers to the interpretation of his teaching on the subject.

To take one or two passages at random, in his *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, Tractate 9, Augustine tells us: "If the spirit of man, when it cleaves to God, is one spirit, as the Apostle openly declares, 'He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit,' how much more is the equal Son, joined to the Father,

together with Him one God!" He goes on to speak of the multitude converted to the Gospel in the first days, and quotes the text "they had one soul and one heart in the Lord." Augustine comments: that if such charity is found among men and has such an effect as to make of them one heart and one soul, how much greater is the charity between the Father and the Son, and how could they be anything but one in the fullest sense of the word. How could the Father and the Son be anything but one God? "If they are two Gods there is not the highest charity between them. For if charity is here so great as to make thy soul and thy friend's soul one soul, how can it be then that the Father and the Son are not one God?"⁴

In this passage Augustine clearly is contrary to what Dr. Rashdall and Dr. Pittenger would have us believe—does "compare the relations between the persons of the Trinity to the relations between two human beings," and does think of the Son "as a distinct person from the Father" in something which at least approaches "the modern sense" of the term, though of course transcending it.

The same comparison is found in his *De Symbolo ad Catechumenas*, 24, and employed for a similar purpose. Elsewhere Augustine tells us: "To God it is not one thing to be, another to be a person; but it is absolutely the same thing. For if to be is said in respect to Himself, but person relatively; in this way we should say three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; just as we speak of three friends, or three relations or three neighbors; in that they are so mutually, not that each of them is so in respect to himself. Wherefore any one of these is the friend of the other two, or the relation, or the neighbor, because these names have a relative significance."

⁴*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VII, p. 97. N. Y., 1888.

(*On the Trinity*, Bk. VII, Ch. 6: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.)

The view of Augustine's teaching on the Trinity advocated by Dr. Rashdall and approved by Dr. Pittenger ignores the analogy of Lover, Beloved and their mutual Love⁵—the Lover, *Amans*, the Father; the Object loved (*Amatus* or *quod amatur*), the Son; and the personal Love (*Amor*), which unites them, the Holy Spirit. This analogy must be born in mind, if we wish a balanced view of the Augustinian doctrine.

Dr. Pittenger would be well-advised to peruse the many passages in Augustine and other Fathers interpreting Genesis I, 26. He would probably revise his conception of what the Fathers taught as to the Holy Trinity, and might conceivably even revise his own teaching on the subject.

Dr. Pittenger tells us that he has tried throughout his book to be consistent in using the term *Logos* or Word to refer to "the second differentiation in the Godhead" which most Christians call the Son. "It has been my own conviction for many years that the term 'Son' is appropriate only to the incarnate Lord, and that in discussion of the Godhead himself [!], in his distinctions and relations, it is highly confusing" (p. 186). He quotes with approval Dr. C. C. Richardson of Union Theological Seminary, who is willing to apply the term Son to Jesus of Nazareth in his relation to his heavenly Father, but insists that "we must avoid applying to the divine what is appropriate merely to the human." He thinks that Dr. Richardson here "penetrates to the heart of the difficulty in the common use of *communicatio idiomatum*." He is aware that he (Dr. Pittenger) and Dr. Richardson will be accused of a "Nestorian" tinge in their thought about the person of Christ, but

reiterates his conviction that "Nestorius' position," which he mistakenly equates with that of the Antiochenes generally, was "right and sound in this regard." He adds that "if we should speak of Jesus as the 'Son' meaning the humanity of our Lord, of the divinity which was his, or in him, as the Word or *Logos* or Self-Expressive Activity of God, and of the unity of these in the one total life as Jesus Christ or Emmanuel (as Nestorius himself would have wished)—if we do this, we shall (I think) have come to some manageable terminology, at any rate." He adds that this has been his intention in the book, although he expressed the fear that he has "lapsed now and again into less precise usage" (pp. 186, 187).

It is indeed unfortunate that he has made such "lapses" (not only before this passage, but afterwards: pp. 217, 218, 224, etc.), and that we are only warned on page 186 of the fact that he holds that God had no Son previous to the Incarnation. The breach between Dr. Pittenger's views and those of the Christian Church would have been even clearer had this statement appeared in the first chapter or the preface. One can see certain advantages from the author's point of view in holding that there was no Son of God, strictly speaking, before the Incarnation as in that case it would appear that we have to do with two Sons—a human son (the son of Joseph and Mary, on the writer's premises) and a divine Son, who indwelt Him; and thus again the breach with the historic Christian Faith would be strikingly evident.

But it evidences an impoverished theology when the Father-Son relationship is removed from the Godhead—in its eternal being—leaving only the God-Word relationship (in this connection). For a relationship drawn (so far as thought and language go) from the analogy of the

⁵*De Trin.* 8:12, etc.

family is surely far richer than one drawn from the internal operations of the individual mind alone. Each, to be sure, needs to be balanced by the other, and each is balanced by the other in the Fourth Gospel, and in the best Christian theologians (including Athanasius and Augustine), and in the Church's Faith. The removal of this Father-Son relation—as an *eternal* relation—represents a great distortion and impoverishment of Christian teaching as to the Trinity—that is, as to the true and living God. It was one of the great merits of St. Athanasius that he refers to Christ—whether as incarnate or as preincarnate—as the *Son* of God more frequently than as the Word or *Logos*. Thus he rescued Christianity from the metaphysical jungle to which it seemed in danger of being banished by the Arian logicians and by some of the second and third century apologists and theologians before them.

One would have to rewrite considerable sections of the New Testament to fit in with Dr. Pittenger's theology. We would have to get rid of John 3:16, in the sense in which the inspired writer meant it, since God had no only-begotten Son to give previous to the Incarnation—only an "eternal subsistent mode of self-expression." However, since there is only a difference of degree between Christ and other men, according to our author, it might not make much difference, and it would probably seem like an exaggeration to refer to one "only-begotten" or "only" Son. We should probably have to excise the verse "God is love," in the inspired writer's sense—at least as referring to God eternally as being eternally a Father and having eternally a Son.

God the Father (if we may still call Him this) is guilty of "highly confusing" language when He says to "the Son": "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Hebrews 11:8, quoting Psalm 45) and did

not realize as clearly as Dr. Pittenger and Dr. Richardson that "we must avoid applying to the divine what is appropriate merely to the human" (p. 187). After this we shall scarcely be surprised to find a mere Apostle going off the tracks and describing "the Son, of God's love" as "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation," or "the One born before all creation" (*protokos pases ktiseos*) and telling us that "in him (or by him) all things were created," and that "in him (that is, in this 'Son') all things consist" or "hold together" (Colossians 1:13 ff). The same must be said of the Fathers of the Council which gave us the Church's great Creed, in which mention is made of "the only-begotten (or unique) Son of God" as "begotten before all ages," whereas there was no Son, (on our author's premises) until He (or It) "came down from heaven," if one may pardon the language which suggests "intrusion" or "intervention from without," and "was made man," or better united Himself (Itself?) in unique degree to one who was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary (no, that won't do—"the Son of Joseph and Mary") the New Testament and the Creed would have to be radically revised to fit in with this theology.

Professor Pittenger justly echoes Von Hugel's protest against a *false* Christocentrism, and insists that the incarnation in Christ as a form "implies a wider operation which is both background and condition of it." He adds "the phrase in the 'Nicene Creed' which speaks of the Word 'by whom all things were made' is the credal token of this truth" (p. 218). Of course the 'Nicene Creed' speaks not of the Word but of the "*Son*" "through whom all things were made."

The author is far from consistent—at one time telling us that there is no such thing as a social Trinity and that we must

get rid of all such notions, at other times making much of the "distinctions and relationships" in "the mystery of the divine Reality," so that "it may properly be said that sociality as well as personality are to be ascribed to deity—although of course both sociality and personality can be ascribed to him only in an analogical sense" (p. 216).

Again, it is usually suggested that Jesus of Nazareth and the Word Who was incarnate or "en-manned" in Him, are two distinct persons, but occasionally language is used which implies that Jesus is the same person as the eternal Word. All this is very confusing—no less confusing than to be told that we should not refer to any Son of God before the incarnation, whereas the author has from time to time made such reference, and even after this admonition continues to speak of a pre-incarnate Son.

These glaring inconsistencies suggest that a great deal of the book was written at a time when the author believed rather more of the Church's Faith than he now does, and that the revisions and subtractions were not as thoroughly and consistently carried through as might have been expected.

All of this makes it difficult to summarize the author's doctrine of the Incarnation or the closely related doctrine of the Trinity. At times it looks as if the material for such a summary was to be given us, as when Dr. Pittenger recalls in interesting fashion the distinctions made by early Christian apologists between "the Logos *endiathetos*, indwelling in God; *prophorikos*, outgoing, outspoken; *spermatikos*, present in men, and *enanthropesanta*, 'en-manned' in our Lord" (p. 216). The last phrase doubtless represents a slip of the typewriter (here and on p. 167) for *enanthropesas*. Why the author makes this particular translation, instead of the usual "being made man," I am at a loss to say,

unless it be that it lends itself more readily to the notion of one person indwelling another—a divine person indwelling a human—than the translation which is almost unanimously adopted, not only in English, but in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Russian, Latin, and I believe all other languages.

But the discussion is scarcely begun before it trails off into an emphatic but rather irrelevant assertion that "Jesus as man did not preexist his conception and birth" (p. 218). Who ever supposed that He did? Only a few heretics or eccentrics (apart from Origen) have ever thought that our Lord in His *human* nature preexisted. Unfortunately Dr. Pittenger leaves us in considerable doubt whether the Person whom men knew and loved—or hated—as Jesus of Nazareth preexisted. Most of the references, taken in conjunction with the Virgin Birth as a legend, leave us with the impression of a person born by Mary to Joseph Who had no preexistence, but Who was united in a very special degree to the Eternal Word (Who should not be described as the Eternal Son) or Self-Expression of God.

"It must be clear that in terms of trinitarian theology there can be no pre-existence of the human mind, nature, self, ego, of Jesus of Nazareth. The only possible justification of such a theory would be by following Origen in his view that *all* souls pre-exist and that Jesus' soul was 'united with the Word' in that pre-existent state. But this seems to most of us unnecessary if not absurd or impossible." So far we can agree wholeheartedly with the author. But he continues: "... hence we must reject outright any idea of a pre-existence of Jesus and along with this rejection an incredible amount of pious error and confusion. Something *did* pre-exist: it was the Eternal Word of God who is incarnate in Jesus." Since, according

to the author, the Word is continually incarnating Himself (or Itself) in varying degrees in nature, in history, and in humanity, it is hard to see how we can avoid taking him at his word, as denying any preexistence, human or divine, to the person known as Jesus. The words spoken by Jesus (or at least put on his lips by the inspired author) in the fourth Gospel, "before Abraham was, I am," become on this theory meaningless or blasphemous, and it is difficult to blame the Jews for wanting to stone Him (if we accept this view). This becomes even more evident when we remember that Dr. Pittenger insists that the difference between Jesus and other men is only a difference of degree, that we all are potentially what Jesus was—except that He realized the potentiality and we do not. But the next baby to be born might conceivably realize this potentiality. Did the divine Word preexist in Jesus in any other sense than He "preexisted" in the latest child—or the next child—to be born or than He "preexisted" in Socrates or Buddha or in any of us? It is a very important point and the matter is never really cleared up elsewhere. It looks then as if any and all preexistence must be denied to our Lord.⁶ (The author speaks, by the way, as if a great deal of popular devotion presupposed the preexistence of Jesus Christ *as man*. Most of us have never encountered such teaching and we wonder whether it is not simply a bogey with which he is scaring himself and others.)

When anyone sets out to reconcile the Faith with modern thought, inevitably one asks, which modern thought? What types

or aspects of modern thought? Professor Pittenger's aim is to reconcile the Faith—or rather the extreme Antiochene version of it—with the "process-philosophy" which has been strongly represented in recent American philosophical thought, and to some extent in that of other countries. This school of course lays the greatest emphasis on the concept of change and becoming. Dr. Pittenger makes a good deal of use of Whitehead, but also of Professor Charles Hartshorne, whom he justly considers one of our great American philosophical thinkers, with much to contribute to theological restatement. The author mentions various other living or recent philosophers whom he has found helpful—Lloyd-Morgan, Alexander, Professor A. N. Whitehead, Smuts and others. He considers that Alexander had a very inadequate theological development, that Professor Whitehead had "a better but still not entirely satisfactory because not developed theology" (p. 152).

Some of us would consider Whitehead's philosophy "not entirely satisfactory"—to put it mildly—not because of its undeveloped theology but because it is developed along lines that are quite contrary not only to the Jewish-Christian idea of God but to a sound theism. For example when he tells us that "it is as true to say that God transcends the World as that the World transcends God"; "it is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God," "it is as true to say that God is permanent and the World fluent as that the World is permanent and God is fluent," "God and the World stand over against each other, expressing the final metaphysical truth that appetitive vision and physical enjoyment have equal claim to priority in creation,"⁷ or that "God is the primordial creature,"⁸—the dif-

⁶It ought to be noticed, as bearing both on the Person of Christ and on His preexistence that Dr. Pittenger on p. 104 criticized Mr. S. F. Davenport for holding that incarnation (unlike immanence) cannot be a matter of degree (p. 103) and also "because he is able to see the operation of the Logos made actual or personal only in the single instance of Jesus Christ."

⁷*Process and Reality*, pp. 492, 493

⁸*ibid.*, p. 42

ficulty is not that the theology is undeveloped but that it is developed along anti-Christian and even anti-theistic lines. To describe it as "not entirely satisfactory," from the Christian point of view, is a masterpiece of understatement.

It was one of the merits of Thornton's great work *The Incarnate Lord* that while thoroughly at home with the philosophies of organism and making use of their concepts and terminology to express the Christian Revelation—especially in the field of Christology—he refused to follow any one philosophy slavishly, and to subordinate the revelation in Christ to any philosophical system, including Whitehead's.

It is one of the chief weaknesses of Dr. Pittenger's work that he, unlike Thornton, does subordinate the Christian revelation to philosophical considerations. The Incarnation is expressed in terms of a philosophy only partially reconcilable with the Christian religion united with a theology (the ultra-Antiochene) which the Church Universal condemned in the Fifth Ecumenical Council fourteen hundred years ago. Some would say that Dr. Pittenger's book represents the wedding of an obsolescent philosophy with an obsolete theology. This would not be, in my judgment, an entirely fair judgment—it is too early to call the philosophy obsolescent, though it has, I believe, lost ground in recent years—but the theology of Theodore and Nestorius is certainly obsolete, and was found inadequate and "played out" back in the sixth century.

The main difficulty is not that any given philosophy is inadequate—all human philosophy is inadequate—but that to satisfy the supposed demands of modern thought and a particular conception of what a complete humanity requires, the Church's doctrine of the Incarnation is deformed, the Virginal Conception and the Empty Tomb reduced to legends, the doctrine of the Trinity

stated in a one-sided and unbalanced fashion which may make it acceptable to Unitarians but evacuates it of half the meaning that the Christian Church has always found in it. The writer has not interpreted the Mystery—he has betrayed it.

The task which Dr. Pittenger sets himself—that of stating the faith in modern terms and contributing to the reconciliation of Christian teaching and modern thought—is a task which theologians can never relinquish, least of all in this field of Christology. But as Congar and Guitton have emphasized, there are two ways of going about this necessary task. The first way is to survey the living tradition of the Church, steeping oneself in it, tracing the history of a doctrine in such a manner as to perceive the identity of the truth amid all its development—to seek to understand it and appropriate it, then to turn to the thought of our day, to seek to understand both what it is saying and what it is trying to say—and thus to discover what elements in it are in harmony with the truth of God revealed in Christ and taught by the Spirit-guided Church, and what elements are basically at variance with her living tradition, assimilating the first, and rejecting the second.

The second way is to immerse oneself in contemporary thought assimilating its language, its philosophy, and its spirit, saturating oneself with it, then to turn to the Church's tradition, ferreting out whatever in the past or present can be made to fit in with current thought, rejecting what is or seems contrary to this and adjusting the rest of the tradition to it. In the first case, one receives a fresh confirmation of the Church's tradition, and a new appreciation of its riches, or else one is led to a new and richer or more precise expression of the traditional exposition. In the second case, one makes a "restatement" of the

tradition where this can no longer be recognized—the truth has not been further developed, but altered and mutilated, explained away or denied.

It is regrettable that the author of this book appears to have followed the second

of these methods, with what result we have seen. If he could bring himself to practice the art of "thinking with the Church," there is no one better equipped to perform the valuable and urgent task before us.

Deferred Belief in the Virgin Birth: A Scholar's Confession

• G. R. Elliott

The Rev. William DeWitt Hyde, Congregational Minister, president of Bowdoin College from 1885 till his death in June 1917, exemplified the Liberal Christianity of the later nineteenth century at its best. During his last four years I as a young teacher of English at Bowdoin enjoyed an unusual intimacy with him because of his intense interest in poetry, especially in its bearing upon religion and life. And I can testify to his rare degree of success in applying Christian principles to the ways, perforce often devious, of himself—a shrewd, witty, eminent administrator of a secular educational institution. Towards the end of his life his bearing was conspicuously noble: in declining health he was confronted with acute academic problems in a warring darkening world. Overworked and overstrained he refused, against urgent medical advice, to give up his Senior course in Christian Ethics, a subject so pertinent to the time. There, as in his sermons and numerous writings, he constantly stressed the fact that religion cannot mean much unless it means centrally a special kind of daily life. Dogmas should be relegated to a distant background; they could so easily obscure the moral issue. On principle he avoided controversy in regard to them except when it was thrust upon him by querists. More than once he was led to declare that the Nicene Creed was unfortunate in being confined to “the prenatal and post-mortem aspects of the life of Jesus.” And finally he decided,

after long reluctance, that he must speak out boldly in regard to the Virgin Birth, which was more and more bothering the young people to whom he was devoted. He was fully aware of the poetic beauty and the spiritual significance of the mythical (in his view) Birth Stories. But to insist on a literal belief *in every word of them*, as at this time many elders still did, was to obscure for youngsters the moral and vital essence of Christianity. One morning therefore he asserted in the College chapel that “the dogma of the Virgin Birth is IMMORAL.”

Those words got into the newspapers and aroused a nation-wide protest of the faithful, much to the unholy glee of academic skeptics, including myself. At that time my religion, insofar as I had any, was a sort of vague Emersonian pantheism—or immanentism, for Emerson, adored by me, had termed “pantheism” as applied to his own outlook a “stupid noun.” A few years earlier I had acquired a Ph.D. at the University of Jena, Germany, where I attended a number of lectures by “higher critics” (so called in those days) of the Bible. One of them opened his course on the fourth Gospel with the words: “Ladies and gentlemen, John was of course a beautiful dreamer” (*der Johannes war ja ein schöner Träumer*). For me the Bible was a superb collection of folk poetry; selected passages of the King James Version were taught with gusto in my Survey course, with comparative references to similar writings all the way from *Beowulf* to Thomas Hardy. Jesus was a very much inspired young man who was executed, as Emerson put it, at the Tyburn of His nation. I shared that great American’s aversion to

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Christocentric religion. Hence I was non-plussed by Mr. Hyde's evident *adoration* of Christ. All the more striking because of his refusal to dogmatize was the fact that he often spoke as if he regarded Jesus as a Person uniquely equivalent to Deity! In that respect his Liberalism seemed to me old-fashioned and, from the idealistic standpoint, somewhat blasphemous.

So it is with increasing wonder that as a septuagenarian I look back upon the process by which there came to me in middle age a belief in the Incarnation, and, eventually, in the Virgin Birth. A number of other elderly scholars with whom I've conversed had much the same experience: in earlier years their present creed seemed utterly impossible. One of them, a lover of freshwater fishing, remarked that retrospectively he felt like a canoeist impelled by insistent currents in a direction he had tried hard to avoid. All of us confessed a crucial effect upon us of the first World War.

That effect in my own case was accentuated by the fact that I was kept out of active service by a minor ailment (a pair of flat feet) while many men of my age, and a host of undergraduates not much younger than I, were enlisted. Under ROTC auspices at Bowdoin I had to teach Military French, of which I knew little, to young would-be officers who did not wish to learn it; one of them at the end of the first semester persisted on saying "gee swiss" for "*je suis*." And soon the leading student in my regular course, a lover of poetry, himself lovable and a promising poet, now a lieutenant in France, was killed in action. Struck in the abdomen by a piece of shell (I could feel it) he concealed his agony from his squad, staggering on ahead of them until he fell. The very heroism of the millions of young men who were being slaughtered was ominous: their successors could be counted on to fight on behalf of

their nations until the end of time. And more ominous was the self-satisfaction of the victors at the close of the war; their cause was of course comparatively just, but it seemed to them totally, even divinely, righteous. And their treatment of Germany, for those of us who knew that country at first hand, was obviously sowing seeds of further conflict. The League of Nations was a debating society designed to intensify national, and blatantly defective, points of view. A scholar looking back over human history had to conclude that the modern nations could become, with the aid of science, climactically internecine.

Apparently the sole institution that had any supernatural reality was the Christian Church; and its rising ecumenical movement seemed providential. On the other hand the general decline of morals, and of moral standards, so notorious in the nineteen-twenties, seemed really diabolic. Secular education was powerless to arrest it; indeed the pronouncements of certain educators were actually fostering it. But College and Church, if only they could achieve a working alliance, could do much. Increasingly, along with others, I perceived that the fundamental modern tragedy was the divorce of secular culture from social religion. Organized education and organized Christianity had inherent faults. But teachers, including me, who loved the former while repudiating the latter, advocating personal and private religion over against "churchianity," were not merely illogical: they were, very manifestly in the nineteen-twenties, blind to the signs of the times. So I began, with reluctant dutifulness, to attend the Congregational Church in Brunswick, Maine—cheered by learning that some years ago it had absorbed the local Unitarians. One of them remarked to me: "The Congos killed our church with kindness and swallowed us whole."

Encounter with the Creed

But the eleven a.m. service sorely hampered my efforts to complete my first book:¹ Sunday morning was a prime time for writing. So after transferring from Bowdoin to Amherst College in 1925 I decided to attend the eight a.m. Eucharist in the local Episcopal church. And that brief, sermonless service with its fine liturgy proved to be a helpful prologue to the morning's labors in the criticism of poetry. Moreover the occasion provided fellowship: I found that several other persons were, like me, creedless believers in Christian ethics. But now I was faced once a week with the Nicene Creed; which curiosity impelled me to peruse in its Latin version; and certain words impressed me more and more: "Very God of (or from) very God . . . for us men and for our salvation . . . was incarnate." If that were true the Emersonian Over-soul was a personal Being Who once lived, actually, a human life on earth. If, however, it was merely a beautiful myth, final and supreme sequel to the numberless pagan tales of gods in human form, why then, I began to feel strongly, God had no *crucial* relation to human history. And now it struck me that the literary approach to the Bible could render a scholar obtuse to its religious meaning. So, in new search for that meaning, I set aside a few hours of every week for a rereading of the Bible, for a study of the Greek New Testament and for a rapid scrutiny of many of its interpreters, all the way from St. Augustine to the latest biblical critics, foreign (particularly German) and American. One new book affected me deeply: William Temple's *Christus Veritas* (1924). Here was an author who, though an Anglican

bishop (of Manchester)², evinced a liberal breadth of mind; and who, though an up-to-date philosopher, had a strong belief in the atoning Incarnation of God in Christ. In the upshot, I came to believe that only this faith could account for the history of the Christian Church, and could enable it to become in the future a powerful world-fellowship, ameliorating the ways of the nations and, eventually, converting the human race into a human family with God as its Father.

Only that faith could *radically* convert suave persons, notably college teachers (including me) and their students, from subtle and hidden self-centricity to devoted service—such as I had witnessed in President Hyde, and was now observing in many others—of the Eternal Love. Secular education, for the most part unintentionally, was educating our young people away from Christianity, heavily to their detriment, particularly in the "Naughty Nineteen-twenties," and much to the detriment at all times of everyone whom they influenced in the course of their post-collegiate lives. Certainly that ever-widening secularizing process ought to be firmly counteracted by teachers who were would-be Christians. But how could that be done in class-hours dedicated to secular subjects, in my case *belles-lettres*? The least retreat from that pressing problem was plainly sinful; yet to drag religion into my lectures would be unfair and, in those days, very repellent to most of my listeners. Poetry must be taught first and last for poetry's sake. But it was clearly right, if only for the sake of honesty, to let the students see that my criterion for truth in literature was now the Christian revelation and Christian philosophy. Full appreciation must be aroused for the special beauties and insights of, for instance, Pope and Shelley; but I

¹*The Cycle of Modern Poetry*, Princeton Press, 1929, now out of print.

²Later Archbishop of York, then of Canterbury.

must point out the inadequacy of their religious views for present and perennial human needs, in telling contrast with the convictions expressed in the First Book of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Browning's *Epistle of Karshish*, Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*, and the like. And now questions and objections, often scornful, came thick and fast from the class. In particular the students often demanded: what relevance to "present human needs" had the ancient dogma of the Trinity? One simple and effective answer seemed to be that this dogma was a necessarily imperfect attempt to formulate the truth that God is all in all—infinately above us, descending to us, coming into and *up through* us—a fact that could be experienced *now* in persistent prayer and meditation.

Classroom Dialogue

Discussions in class, encouraged by me, proved to be very enlivening on the whole; but they were often too lengthy and much fuller of heat than light. In cutting them short I invited the disputants to confer further in my home in leisure hours. And the result, far exceeding my expectation, was that informal conferences in my study became my main resource as a teacher. Here I was freed from the grooves of secular academic policy, and the students could cast off the constraints of current undergraduate convention. Coming to me in small groups, or singly, they frankly confessed their personal problems. And I discovered with awe, that my anxious but very defective efforts to help them made me increasingly aware of the Real Presence in our midst of the Shepherd whom their souls so desperately needed.³

Frequent topics were the Virgin Birth

and the Empty Tomb of Christ, presently abbreviated to "VB" and "ET" by my conferees; whose viewpoints regarding those matters differed in accordance with their upbringings and the opinions of their various teachers. Most of them asked whether a belief in the Incarnation *required* a belief in those two miracles; and my answer was no. But this was very disturbing for the minority, including a number of able and earnestly religious youths. And when they demanded my own view as to the historicity of those two events my answer had to be painfully hesitant. Obviously, I said, the "VB" and "ET" could not, unlike the *central* Christian truths, be matters of present experience. On the other hand they had been accepted, and were still accepted, by the majority of Christians; and that fact, I opined, could outweigh the skepticism of academic persons. Pressed further I averred that in those matters, as in regard to all the New Testament miracles, I was still seeking light. And that assertion was truthful in a rather ironical fashion; for in fact the attitude of these youngsters, whose faces haunted me in private, was causing me now to open my mind and reconsider those subjects.

Unquestioningly I had accepted the negative view of modern biblical critics. In regard to the Virgin Birth the Rev. James Moffatt, excellent Presbyterian scholar, seemed normal in his recent statement that the "birth-stories are naive attempts to express the Christian sense of what was implied in the unique filial consciousness of Jesus."⁴ And likewise the Empty Tomb in the Gospels was no doubt legendary. But now I began to consider a certain feature of human nature which skeptical criticism had failed (and today still fails, I think)

³This point is developed in an autobiographic book of mine not yet published, *Deity and Teacher*.

⁴*Theology of the Gospels*, Scribner's, 1913, p. 136.

to envisage plainly.⁵ A deep instinct impels mourners to signalize, and to treasure in memory, the burial place of a beloved person. And surely that instinct must have been extremely potent in the hearts of Christ's disciples, in and near Jerusalem, after the Crucifixion if His body remained in its grave. The more obscure its situation, the more they would have been inspired to locate and remember it. And the Resurrection *visions* which they experienced, or heard of others experiencing in Galilee, would have intensified their reverence for that sacred spot where His earthly remains lay. Thus those visions, so far from initiating an empty-grave myth, would have forestalled it. And the destruction of Jerusalem a generation later would have made the Church's regard for the burial site all the more poignant.⁶ But what the Church venerated was an *empty* tomb and, together with that, the early disciples' objective (not visionary) experience of the spiritual body⁷ (1 Corinthians 15:44) of their risen Lord. Tradition would naturally embellish the story but could not have invented its essentials—unless we conceive the early disciples as abnormally, indeed *miraculously*, devoid of the deep human instinct noted above.

And now, though at first very hesitatingly, my mind began to associate the Virgin Birth with the Empty Tomb. Be-

⁵This matter is more fully dealt with in an essay by me on the Empty Tomb in *The Living Church* for November 24, 1957.

⁶Recent archeological research has made it seem very probable that the Tomb as reconstructed, in the time of Constantine and later, occupied the original site.

⁷Donald H. Andrews' essay "The Challenge of the New Cosmology" in *The Christian Scholar* for September, 1958, particularly his reference to the human body, bears upon the mystery of the resurrectional transformation of a "natural" into a "spiritual" body. See also Howard Clark Kee's essay in the March, 1956 number on "The Biblical Understanding of Miracle."

cause of Moffatt's skeptical view of the Virgin Birth I was struck by the rendering in his translated New Testament (1922) of the prologue to the third Gospel: Luke was essaying "a narrative of the *established facts* [*italics mine*] in our religion. . . . I have gone carefully over them all myself from the very beginning." The initial "fact," for him, was the Virgin Birth. And though it was perhaps embellished in his "narrative," and more or less no doubt in his sources, neither he nor they could easily be thought of as having entirely invented it. And this consideration applied with special force to Matthew: his account was aimed at Hebrew Christians whose religious background would have rendered the Virgin Birth so repugnant as to be unbelievable unless it was true—true in the experience of the one who was the original source of the story, an orthodox and devout Jewish woman, Mary herself. Surely she was very exceptionally truthful, as well as pure; otherwise she would not have been a perfect nurturer of the Child Who was "subject unto" her (Luke 2:51; "obedient" in RSV). A mother's effect on a child is definitive; and a wrong mother—this Irishism occurred to me—would have ruined the human life of God on earth. Indeed she was chosen; and she was not one who could be induced, even by the strongest urge of yearning messianic imagination, to *invent* a divine conception for her Child. Well, such and many further considerations, here omitted, led me gradually to the conviction that the Virgin Birth was no less authentic than the Empty Tomb. With fresh wonder and awe, and joy, I could join the congregation in reciting credal words hitherto silently listened to by me with a feeling, which I had tried in vain to suppress, of academic superiority: "conceived by the Holy Ghost" . . . "incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary."

A Change in Emphasis

Today, however, the aspect of that matter is quite different from what it was a generation ago. Huxley's famous epigram has proved to be very prophetic: no miracle in religion is more astonishing than the atomic and cosmic wonders displayed by science. The actuality of the Empty Tomb and the Virgin Birth is now a less important question than this: are they consonant with the completely human (as well as divine) nature of Jesus? I don't know just what answer is given by the majority of Christian teachers nowadays when their students press that question. But I can state the reply given by me in many recent talks with young people; and I know that it fairly represents the opinion of a number of other scholars with whom I've conferred.

The super-gas available for your car at service stations is supremely normal, not abnormal; it is, or so you trust, the highest, purest quality of gasoline. Similarly the term "supernatural" (repugnant for most youngsters today) does not mean, when applied to Christ's humanity, unnatural: it means supremely natural. In Him human nature had, and has eternally, its fullest stature. Through its medium His Father and ours gives us, by the working of the Spirit proceeding from them, "power to become children of God" (John 1:12). On earth He was tempted, tried, at all points as we are. Certainly He had a unique strength in meeting His trials; but also He was tried uniquely. Because of His surpassing love for His compatriots He had a very strong urge to make His mission convincing for them by using His powers in a popular messianic fashion.⁸ And the indications are that He recognized that

urge as not only wrong but satanically strong (Luke 4:9-13, Matthew 16:23); that it recurred to Him continually; and that at the last the overcoming of it was climactically agonizing for His human soul. But always He renounced it absolutely. His wonderful works—not termed "miracles" in the New Testament—were essentially⁹ not abnormal. They were as natural to the supreme humanity of the Son of God as were His everyday words and conduct; like these, to which they were always subordinated by Him, His wonderful works expressed His compassion and furthered His redemptive purpose. They were supremely normal, not abnormal. And so were the so-called "miracles" of the Empty Tomb and the Virgin Birth.

The advent of Christ was both a climactic result, and a crucial invasion, of the long process of cosmic and human evolution. To have been conceived by "the will of the flesh" and "of man" (John 1:13)¹⁰ would in His case have been as abnormal as a miraculous career on earth; and equally abnormal would have been the corruption of His pure body after death. That body was conceived, and eventually raised from the dead, by the will of God. Not otherwise could God in the form of His Son have *naturally* entered into, and departed from, his earthly existence. In the beginning of that existence He was transformed into a human being without ceasing to be divine; in the end He was retransformed into divine being without ceasing to be human. We may properly speak of His terrestrial life in terms of the Christian materiality (or materialism) resultant from

⁸This word leaves open the question as to what *inessential* details in the case of each "miracle" were added by tradition.

⁹The early variant reading of this verse, "was born" for "were born", is fairly and well considered in William Temple's *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, Vol. I, p. 12f.

¹⁰A faint but suggestive parallel is a great and worthy statesman's temptation to achieve quick success by sensational methods.

the Incarnation. After its divine inception the body-and-soul being of Christ took form in the womb, was born, grew as child, matured as man, and suffered death, all in the same way as Everyman. A mystery beyond the reach of science is in the life-process of *every* person—from an enwombed embryo, at first the size of the dot on an i, through birth and maturity to dissolution¹¹—and beyond that, as testified by a primal instinct in us, to some sort of immortal yet not inhuman form. That mystery is (so to speak) taken up into, and transfigured by, the utter and adorable Mystery of the Life of Christ, before, during, and after His earthly years. His Life is supernatural in the sense of surpassing natural.

A Proper Order

Liberal Christianity, though wrong in discarding,¹² is entirely right in subordinating the Empty Tomb and the Virgin Birth. For this is exactly what was done, under the Spirit's guidance, by the compilers of the New Testament, and antecedently by the first Christian preachers, notably St. Paul. Of course the extant Letters of the great Apostle are very far from comprising all that he preached or conversed upon, much less all that the early Christians believed; but certainly those Letters, cherished and preserved by their recipients, convey his main emphases. So it is significant that while stressing the Resurrection and the divine Sonship of Christ he never refers explicitly to the Empty Tomb and the Virgin Birth. The same is true of the preaching of Christ Himself. He announced His unique rela-

tion to "my Father" and foretold His Resurrection; but He never mentioned, in His public utterances, those two wonderful events:¹³ these would have seemed to His nation miracles of the messianic type upon which He was determined not to base His "authority" (Mark 1:22ff.). This does not mean that He was ignorant of them; scholarly wariness along with Christian instinct should prevent us from jumping to that conclusion. As for St. Paul, his belief in the *bodily* Resurrection implies clearly an awareness of the Empty Tomb, and we cannot assume that he knew nothing of the Virgin Birth. But very certain is the fact that he and the other early missionaries, swayed by the example of their Master, emphasized always His saving gospel, never the two "supernatural" events that would have been utterly misinterpreted by Jews and Gentiles eager for overpowering "signs" (Matthew 12:39), the former yearning for a national messiah, the latter ready to worship the miraculous human form of a god (as in Acts 14:11ff.). The Virgin Birth and the Empty Tomb could not be seen in the right light until, first the Church and then her proselytes, had grasped the truth of the *substantial* identity of Christ with the one Deity—until each disciple could recognize Him plainly as "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).¹⁴

Their recognition brought out the full naturalness, first of the Empty Tomb, recorded by all four Evangelists, and then of the Virgin Birth, recorded only by two of them. For the supernatural inception of

¹¹Hollywood could make a very *moving* film displaying that "life-process."

¹²Under the influence mainly of German academic extremism, as exemplified today so strikingly by the very able and devoted biblical scholar, Professor Rudolph Bultmann.

¹³Obviously Luke (2:49) had his preceding account of the Virgin Birth in mind when recording Christ's reference at the age of twelve to "my Father"; but significantly he refrained from stating that sequence explicitly.

¹⁴Of course this simple avowal, late and singular in the New Testament, was prepared for by many indirect statements of the Incarnation (e.g. Philipians 2:6) earlier than the Birth Stories of Luke and Matthew.

Christ's earthly body has its true meaning only in the light of its definitive sequel, His bodily Resurrection. The Virgin Birth is subordinate to the Empty Tomb; both are entirely subordinate to the Resurrection. And this when it denotes merely an event in time past is *eternally* subordinate to the constant Presence of the resurrected Christ, as experienced by believers throughout "all the days,"¹⁵ shaping their daily lives. The daily Christian life cannot be directly affected by (in President Hyde's phrase) the "prenatal and post-mortem" events in the Gospel story. But it is indirectly and importantly affected by them when they are seen to be supremely natural¹⁶ features of the Incarnation, belief in which does crucially affect the everyday Christian life. For the Incarnation is at once the central event in human history and the mode of God's constant Presence, creative and re-creative (redeeming), from the "beginning" (John 1:1) to the end of history, in the life of "every man" (John 1:9).

Those two aspects of the Incarnation are complementary and inseparable: we cannot really and fully believe in it as a super-historic mode of Deity unless we believe in it also as an unique historical Event. But uniqueness is just naturally repugnant to the academic mind. Many educated persons, in ancient and modern times, have either rejected that Event or have attempted, in various philosophical ways, to reduce its uniqueness; and their successors will do likewise in the future. Fortunately, how-

ever, no human mind can be wholly academic. And that truism elucidates the following confession; which is true for a number of teachers and students with whom I've conferred.

We know that our faith in the Incarnation, when it is firm and effectual, is the product of Grace working in all members, (learned or unlearned) of the Church, making us realize that we are indeed members of one another, and mastering the whole being of each of us: we believe, then, with the *whole* mind. But, we confess, we often fail to do so. When we're preoccupied with our secular studies the academic *part* of our mind works insidiously, and more or less pridefully, against our belief in the divine-human uniqueness of Christ. But then we are confronted—in accordance, we think, with the strategy of the Holy Spirit—by the inescapable uniqueness of His Empty Tomb and its antecedent, His Virgin Birth. While doubting many minor *details* of the Gospel accounts, particularly Matthew's, we can find no good reason for rejecting the two events that inspired those stories, events which have been accepted by the whole mind of the Church—though not by the academic portions of that mind, so to speak—since the later years of the first century. We regard those events as *material* (in a double sense) aspects of the Incarnation, entirely subordinate to it, but also subsidiary to belief in its utter uniqueness—consonant in that respect with the wonderful but divinely natural works performed by Christ during His ministry on earth, revealing Himself as Lord of all spirits and all flesh. He Himself "became flesh" (John 1:14), as the Church commemorates in her Christmas season—and as the academic persons for whom I'm speaking have come to believe—by "the power of the Most High" (Luke 1:35).

¹⁵As in the Greek text of Matthew 28:20; "all the time" in Moffatt's translation. The complete phrase, "all the days until the end of the world (or era)," might fittingly be rendered, I think, "all the days of the world's time."

¹⁶Non-natural, indeed quite magical, is what they seem to the extreme fundamentalist and the extreme skeptic, from their opposite points of view.

Some Notes on the Nature of Heresy

• J. V. Langmead Casserley

The term "heresy" is defined in Webster's dictionary as "a religious belief, opposed to the orthodox doctrines of the Church; especially, such a belief specifically denounced by the church and regarded as likely to cause schism." Others take it to be a non-acceptance of officially formulated doctrine, probably based upon the counter-formulation of some belief which is either incompatible with the dogma or even its direct contradictory. Certainly the great heresiarchs are anything but indogmatic in spirit; their tendency indeed is to formulate and maintain some counter-dogma upon which they insist as strongly as the orthodox emphasize the dogmas of the Church. In other words, we must not suppose that we can escape the spiritual dangers and unpleasing psychological characteristics of the overly dogmatic mood or cast of mind, merely by rejecting the formulated dogmas of the Church. Indeed, it is this dogmatic mood and mentality, and not dogma itself, which has earned for the terms *dogma* and *dogmatic* the rather unpleasant meaning and repute attached to them in modern speech. It will be part of the task of this paper to disconnect the term dogma from the term dogmatic, and to argue that it is one of the essential characteristics of orthodox Catholic dogma that it cannot be intelligently held,

or contended for in a manner which does justice to its content and spirit, so long as it is maintained and defended by a merely dogmatic mind. The dogmas of the Church are of such a character that we dare not be too dogmatic about them. And yet, paradoxically as it may seem to some, it is nevertheless essential to the integrity of our Christianity, that we maintain them firmly against all comers.

The orthodox Christian contends vigorously for an orthodoxy which is not his own but his Church's, so that the total tradition of the Church continually stands in judgment over the peculiar workings of his own mind. The heretic, on the other hand, can be truly dogmatic, because the orthodoxy for which he so boldly campaigns is not the Church's but his own.

There are indeed two kinds of agnosticism which must be clearly distinguished from each other. The first is the familiar *a priori*, epistemological, dogmatic agnosticism which forbids religious commitment. On the basis of an elaborate criticism of human reason and our capacity for knowledge it arrives, rarely, at the totally sceptical conclusion that we can know nothing at all, but more commonly ends by asserting that there are some things which we are able to know and others which are forever beyond our ken. In the latter case the epistemological analysis leads up to an ontological doctrine, for it boldly ventures to split reality into a knowable part and an unknowable part. We should seem to be nearer the truth in holding that, although we have no reason to suppose that anything which exists is totally unknowable, either

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per se or by us, yet on the other hand it is also true that no existence is ever in fact totally known. The second, and rationally more defensible, form of agnosticism is of the kind which is akin to religious faith, affirmation and worship. It is agnostic precisely because it knows itself to have affirmed conclusions which must transcend the mind of any possible human knower. Its agnosticism is not an alibi for an irresponsible refusal to make life-committing affirmations, rather it is a consequence of the tremendous affirmations which it has made. In this sense we may rightly describe Christian orthodoxy as agnostic. It has affirmed the Transcendence and committed itself to the Mystery, and in so doing it has acknowledged itself to be eternally transcended.

But there is a further and even greater difficulty about regarding heresy as a deviation from officially orthodox doctrine. Such a definition of the term creates an entirely unhistorical perspective, because it inevitably implies or pre-supposes that the formulation of orthodox dogma is prior in time to the formulation of heresy, whereas in fact the formulation of orthodox dogma is the Church's response to the challenge of pre-existing heresy. In the history of the early Church the heresies come first and the formulation of orthodoxy emerges slowly out of the friction and schism which the heresies cause. Thus Arianism precedes Nicaea; similarly the Nestorians and Monophysites precede Chalcedon. In trinitarian doctrine Sabellianism and various forms of Modalism precede the development of the formulae which define the dogma of the Trinity. Thus we have to ask ourselves the question, "How were the heresies recognized as heresies at the point of their inception, when there were as yet no orthodox formulae for them to rebel against or deviate from?" Once adopted, of course, the orthodox formulae served to forewarn

us against, or to protect us from, subsequent revivals of the heresy, but when it first arose, the heresy had to be detected without the aid of the orthodox formulae. "Where then was orthodoxy before the Church officially formulated it?"

Orthodoxy Not Manufactured

Certainly, it must have been somewhere, for the Church does not create orthodoxy. It merely recognizes it in faith, and attempts to define it in such a way as to facilitate the detection of heresy. Primitive orthodoxy is to be found in the Church's loyalty to Scripture and the tradition—in the literal sense of the handing-on—of the Apostolic Rule of Faith. With the development of relatively fixed forms of liturgical worship, Scripture finds its true continuation in the life of the Church, and the biblical and apostolic Christian experience its profoundest expression. Slowly the conviction grows upon the Church that the new heresy is incompatible with the implications, presuppositions and forms of this experience. Thus, orthodoxy before it becomes explicit in formulated dogma, is already implicit in Scripture, in liturgy and in Christian experience.

There is a sense in which heresy is actually necessary for the emergence and formulation of dogma. If there were no heresies there would be no dogmas, no passage from the implicit to the explicit. To define dogma without any reference to some preceding heresy must always be a dangerous and hazardous undertaking, because, in the Providence of God, the occasion for the definition has not yet arisen. The Church does not define dogmas out of a love of dogma for its own sake, or out of a perverse intellectual delight in the mere activity of dogma-making. No doubt, something of this kind has occurred in the modern history of the Roman Church, but

this is one of our reasons, perhaps the chief reason, for distrusting the genuine Catholicity of the modern Roman Church. Papal definitions about the Immaculate Conception, or the Assumption, are discontinuous with events like Nicaea or Chalcedon, or even with the Tome of St. Leo, precisely because they are not and cannot even pretend to be defensive reactions on the part of a Church, determined to protect the integrity of apostolic faith against some heretical perversion of its content, or deviation from its classical forms of expression. When dogma is made for dogma's sake, those who make it have lost all sense of the true purpose and function of dogma, and are not sufficiently under the authority of the total mind of the Church to claim authority for themselves and their own intellectual acts.

Heresy is not any kind of error. Probably we are all of us in error about something or other, but that does not mean that we are heretics. A heresy is some perverted way of interpreting the essentials of faith which overthrows the foundations of Christian life, faith and worship and makes the integrity of the Church's apostolic witness impossible. Thus, not any erroneous belief is a heresy. Some people, for example, affirm the physical assumption of our Lady, while others would deny it. One of these two groups must be in error, but I doubt whether either could be called heretical merely on this account. Such an assumption is certainly not part of the apostolic witness on the basis of which the whole Church is built. Certainly, we can add a belief in the Assumption of our Lady on to our belief in the essentials of the apostolic witness without making any difference to it. It is even more obvious, however, that we can refrain from making this addition without in any way detracting from our solidarity with the apostolic witness. So far as the apostolic witness is concerned, neither

affirming the Assumption nor denying it, can make any possible difference. There is no reason why he who affirms it, and he who denies it, should not both be regarded as equally orthodox from the point of view of any positive interpretation of the nature and function of dogma.

The Patristic Period

There is even a sense in which we may say that heresy is more dogmatic than dogma, for heresy always purports to understand the mystery, indeed to excise the mysterious from the scheme of Christian doctrine, whereas Orthodox Catholic dogma does little more than assert and protect the mystery without endeavoring to explain it.

Catholic dogma in the patristic period is concerned with Christology, that is with upholding the essential mysteries of the Incarnation, the God-Manhood of Jesus of Nazareth, with the personality of the Holy Ghost and with the triune character of the one God. The main function of the orthodox dogmas is to formulate language which involves the decisive rejection of all the heresies. Thus, the Christological dogma rejects Psilanthropism, Arianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorinism and Monophysitism. Again, the trinitarian dogma denies both Unitarianism and Polytheism, and all forms of modalism which merely personify selected divine attributes or some of the metaphysical modes or dimensions of divine being and activity.

The finality of patristic dogma is to be found in this: that it exhausted all the possibilities. So far as the triune being of the one God and the two-fold nature of the one Christ are concerned, there can be no new heresies. All that the modern world has been able to produce in the way of Christian heresies is a mere refurbishing and re-formulation of old ones. Our contemporary

liberal theologians have nothing essentially new to say, only a new language—usually a very complicated and verbose one—for saying it in, and perhaps some new reasons for saying it. The essential content of their affirmations is identical with ancient heresy. It is for this reason, above all, that many of us are so sceptical about their teachings. It is disillusioning, to say the least, to discover that some widely advertised and imposingly heralded new twentieth century truth turns out, on analysis, to be nothing more than a hoary third or fourth century error, expressed less gracefully and less plausibly than it was when originally formulated. Our modern heretics are fully as lethal to the integrity of faith and holiness of life as their classical ancestors, but it must be confessed that they are all too frequently inferior to them in charm of prose style and in that brevity which is, we are told, the soul of wit.

To draw attention to the way in which the patristic theological discussion of the problems of Christology and of the Trinity contrived to exhaust all the possibilities, is to understand why the patristic discussion and its final results are authoritative for all the succeeding ages of Christendom. Certainly for Anglicans, and even for classical Protestants like Luther, the Fathers had immense authority. In Anglican formularies we stand absolutely committed to the decisions of the first four General Councils, and our constant appeal is not merely to the authority of Scripture but to the authority of Scripture as received, interpreted and expounded by the Fathers of the universal, primitive and undivided Church. This presumably is what we mean when in ecumenical documents like the so-called Lambeth Quadrilateral we insist on the acceptance of the Creeds as sufficient statements of faith. To talk about the Creeds in themselves, in abstraction, that is, from the patristic discussion, is rather

artificial procedure. What we really mean in such a context by the phrase "the creeds" is "patristic orthodoxy as formulated by the Councils and expressed in the creeds."

There can thus be no question of the absolute authority of the patristic discussion, but it is perhaps a little more difficult to say precisely why we regard this particular phase of Christian thought as having such an extraordinary, classical significance for all subsequent Christian thought. A merely historical approach towards the problem would no doubt stress the consensus of the patristic age and its antiquity, its proximity to the actual events of Scripture. But patristic thought is not authoritative merely because it happens to be antique. Nor was the patristic Church quite so undivided as sentimentalists sometimes suppose. It merely appears relatively undivided by contrast with our own tragic state of affairs. Nor after all were the Fathers so particularly close in time to the New Testament events. The later, and in some ways greater, Fathers were as distant from the Crucifixion as we are from the Reformation, and we hardly regard ourselves as living next door to the great Reformers!

No, it is not a sentimental primitivism which makes us attribute to the patristic discussion such finality and authority. Rather it is our sense of its classical completeness, of having examined every possibility and found each in turn wanting and defective apart from that one possibility which it ultimately affirmed, as something which seemed good, not only to the Fathers of the early Christian Church, but also to the Holy Ghost. It is this which makes patristic Christianity so absolutely authoritative for all the ages of Christianity that were to succeed it.

Thus, that it succeeded in exhausting all the possibilities is the essence of the

Church's claim for the classical patristic period. The essence of our Christianity is and must remain patristic, and we are bound to the Fathers for all time. But the patristic age is only the classical dogma-making period because it was the period in which Christian men wrestled with and overcame all the great heresies that can possibly threaten the faith. The subsequent ages of Christianity are not dogma-making ages in this sense, because, having the great achievement of the patristic discussions before us, we need no new dogma. We need no new dogmas because we shall not be called upon to face any new heresies. Modern heresy is not really modern at all, but only the antique dressed up in the garments of modernity. "Lord," we say, quoting Scripture as we lay aside the latest essay in twentieth century liberal theology, "surely by this time he stinketh."

Dogma Is Negative

Thus the primary purpose of dogma is negative, the elimination of the great heresies. Without some great heresy there ought not to be, indeed in the strictest sense of the word *dogma* there cannot be, any dogmatic formulation. This means the dogma is not only negative in its primary purpose, but also minimal in extent. We do not have dogmas in the Church except when absolutely necessary. This is why the orthodox Christian thinker, even while greatly prizing and loyally adhering to the Church's doctrine, is able to do so without any unpleasant dogmatism of personality or frame of mind. We are not people who like dogma for its own sake. We perceive its necessity in a naughty world; we thank God for the intellectual brilliance and massive historical effectiveness with which our great formative dogmas were slowly hammered out under the influence of the Holy Ghost; but nevertheless we do not like

dogmas for their own sake, and we are glad to know that there probably will not be any more. We cannot be absolutely sure about this, of course. Our own Anglican communion is unlikely to formulate any more dogmas (would that we could be equally sanguine in hoping that none of its members would ever again attempt to refurbish any antiquated heresies!): The Orthodox Church also is unlikely to essay any new attempts at dogmatic formulation. Only the Roman Church is likely to persist with its illusion that the classical dogma-making period of Christian history is not yet over. And even here we may still hope and pray for a greater measure of theological caution and discretion. But, of course, we cannot entirely discount the possibility that at some future time a reunited church may find itself confronted with a genuinely new heresy, that menaces the integrity of apostolic life, faith and worship as vitally as the classical heresies once did and still do, even in their refurbished forms.

Orthodoxy Is Established

Nevertheless this belief in the finality of the patristic achievement, this Anglican insistence that the great age of dogma-making is over, so that orthodox Christianity is essentially a patristic Christianity, no doubt rediscovered and to some extent re-expressed and re-applied to the problems of life and thought in every age by the interpretative genius of orthodox theologians, who, in their own way, need to be quite as good at the task of resurrecting antique orthodoxy as the modern heretics are at refurbishing ancient heresy leaves us with one difficulty in the modern world which must be resolutely tackled. In what sense, if any, are we justified in regarding classical Protestantism, and those Protestant groups loyal to the traditions of the Reformation which continue it, as heretical? Certainly

the great reformers, Luther and Calvin, like genuinely evangelical Christians today, were absolutely faithful to the great patristic doctrines. If they were heretical it was not in any classical sense. Certainly also, they founded religious and ecclesiastical institutions which lacked efficient forms of leadership and discipline which could protect them from the resurrection of ancient forms of heresy in the later stages of their development. But so far as the Incarnation and the Trinity are concerned, classical Protestantism is orthodox enough. Yet, it must be said on the other hand, that the rise of the great Protestant groups has divided and weakened modern Christendom, even while in many ways enriching it, and has thus been the major contributor to a situation in which we find ourselves saddled with the immense and complicated ecumenical problem. If world-wide schism threatens the very foundations of Christian faith and experience it is hard to deny that Protestantism is not in some sense heretical.

Protestant Deviation

I doubt whether we ought to call classical Protestantism heretical in the strictest sense of the word. The Catholic reader of a journal like *Christianity Today*, though saddened by many things which he finds in its pages—e.g. its hide-bound fundamentalism, its crassly right-wing politics and its indifference to the ecumenical enterprise—cannot but be cheered by its sturdy basic orthodoxy. What we seem to need is some new term like *deviation*, which I borrow unblushingly from the crude and clumsy jargon of contemporary Communism. The classical Protestants adhered to basic patristic orthodoxy, but they deviated so widely from the broad tradition of Christian liturgical expression and devotion, of common life and discipline, that they overthrew the Christian unity they found, without

displaying the slightest capacity to establish a new one. Thus, if we are to use the language advocated in this essay, we should describe classical Protestants as deviants rather than heretics. But this judgment should be carefully qualified in three ways:

a) We must recognize that large numbers of modern Protestants, so vaguely is the term now used, are not classical Protestants in any sense at all. Many of their scholars and theologians have been among the most assiduous in the resurrecting and refurbishing of ancient heresies, and we must sadly admit that, for many reasons into which we cannot enter at present, they have exercised a most perverse influence over considerable numbers of our Anglican brethren. Thus, if we must say that classical Protestantism is not heretical, we must hasten to add that its comparatively loose forms of organization and common life have sheltered and fostered an enormous amount of modern heresy, from which very few Protestant bodies are altogether free.

b) Although classical Protestantism is not in the strict sense of the word heretical, it was marked by a tendency to create new quasi-dogma or pseudo-dogma, similar in principle to that which makes us shake our heads rather sadly as we contemplate the modern history of the Roman Church. Thus, for example, when Luther described the principle of justification by faith, as formulated by himself, as "the article on which the Church stands or falls" it is difficult to resist the impression that he was giving his own formulation of this principle something very like the status of a dogma *de fide* in the Church of God. Now I have no doubt at all that the reality which Luther was trying to capture in verbal and doctrinal form, is indeed of central importance to Christian experience, faith, life and worship. What he was concerned about was the basic Christo-centric principle. Our whole hope of salvation rests upon Christ alone,

and He alone is the Saviour. This, indeed, is something that all Christians believe, and apart from such a belief there can be no Christianity. For Christianity is not, in the strictest sense of the word, a religion, not a saving doctrine, but rather the doctrine of the Saviour, and the majestic figure of the Saviour is the central and dominating one in its entire scheme of life and thought. Nevertheless, Luther's development and expression of this basic conviction in his rather ambiguous formula of "justification by faith alone," is hardly worthy of the status of dogma, even apart from our general doctrine according to which by Luther's time the age of dogma-making had ceased about a thousand years before. If all Christian men are agreed in accepting the truth which Luther was trying to formulate, it is also true that the great majority of Christian men both then and now would wisely and rightly prefer to formulate it in some other way, or perhaps better, prefer not to formulate it at all, except in the testimonial language of liturgy, preaching and prayer, which indeed expresses rather than formulates this great central affirmation of Christian experience and faith.

At the same time we can also trace a tendency to give the status of dogma to certain very extreme views about the status of men as a consequence of the Fall, which although they find ample expression in classical orthodox Christianity, had never achieved anything like dogmatic status. Indeed, the characteristic synergism of Eastern Christianity provides a sharp contrast with the Augustinianism of the West which reminds us of the very real intellectual options which are possible within the broad spectrum of orthodoxy.

It is perhaps significant that modern neo-orthodox Protestantism, which marks a welcome return to the standpoint of the great Protestant reformers, the point at

which, after all, Protestantism was closest to Catholicism, is orthodox not so much because it shares with the great reformers their basic patristic orthodoxy about the Trinity and Incarnation, but orthodox rather in a sense of upholding something very like their extremely pessimistic anthropology, which is not a necessary part of basic patristic orthodoxy at all. Thus, the Protestant reformers not only tended to add to the content of dogmatic orthodoxy, but contrived to do so in such a fashion that many of their followers came at last to regard the additional material as even more central to the Faith than the original deposit which it supplemented. The mere appendage was transformed into the essence. For many living Protestants the *differentia* of Protestantism, that which separated the reformers from their brother-Christians, is more important, characteristic and significant than that which united them to the faith of the ages.

c) It is also the case that many of the Protestant deviations, as they developed and their logical consequences became apparent, led to further departures from the Faith of a more serious character. Thus, for example, the tendency in eucharistic theories like virtualism and receptionism somehow to detach the immense spiritual values of the sacrament from the actuality and significance of the sacramental event itself, does seem to carry potentially within it the much later, so-called "liberal," tendency to detach the spiritual meaning and value of Christianity from the historical Christ-event itself. In theories like virtualism and receptionism a tremendous importance, in obedience to Scripture, is still attached to what happens in us and to us when we receive the Eucharist, and it is still essential, as an act of evangelical obedience, to receive the Bread and Wine according to our Lord's command. Nevertheless, the spiritual value of our Eucharistic devotion is no longer

seen as the consequence of anything that God does in, to, or with the Bread and the Wine, or indeed of anything that occurs in the physical order. Rather God in His faithfulness brings about a spiritual event in us and in the Church which coincides in time with the physical act of obediently eating bread and drinking wine. The coincidence is real but arbitrary, and there is nothing in the intrinsic nature of the event which involves the other.

Now the sacramental events which are the glory of the life of the Church today are analogous to the historical events in and through which God revealed Himself to be redeeming mankind. If the spiritual value of the sacrament is in some way independent of the details of the physical sacramental act, this at all events conduces to a state of mind which is able to envisage the possibility that the spiritual values of Christianity are independent of the alleged historical events which we find in the New Testament. Thus for example, we are familiar with contemporary theologians who are skeptical as to whether such events as the Virgin Birth or the Empty Tomb ever occurred, but who nevertheless vigorously, and no doubt sincerely, declare that they believe *ex animo* in the spiritual value and truth of the realities and doctrines to which these narratives point. I remember one such theologian saying to me, "Mary was a spiritual virgin, not a physical one." I could only wonder what a spiritual virgin is. I said to him, "What do you mean by a spiritual virgin? Do you mean a frigid wife?" It seemed to me that I knew what the word "virgin" meant and that I was entitled to doubt whether the spirit was the part of us to which virginity could properly be attributed. The point is that the attempt to disentangle spirituality from event which we find in some of the early Protestant Eucharistic theories turns up again in many modern liberal theologians in the attempt to

disentangle the spiritual values of Christianity from history, so that just as Protestantism at one time was able not to take the actual physical, sacramental event with too much seriousness, so now it is able to be equally non-serious about the historicity of crucial New Testament episodes. It is only fair to add, however, that one large segment of modern Protestantism, perhaps in some ways the most authentic of those which confront us today, the fundamentalists, are at least free from philosophical and theological errors of this kind. Fundamentalists differ from Catholics about many things, and Catholics differ from them in most important respects, yet both are agreed in treating the historicity of the New Testament with radical seriousness, both are agreed that God has so entangled spirituality and truth with event that it has become impossible for the theologian to disentangle them. "That which God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Thus what I have described as the deviations rather than the heresies of classical Protestantism were nevertheless pregnant with heresy, and it is undeniable that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many of such heresies have been lately brought to birth.

We Anglicans are not members of a confessional church. The nearest thing in Anglicanism to the somewhat verbose Reformation confession is the *39 Articles*, a politic and, indeed, often deliberately ambiguous document of considerable historical value, and still, because of its fundamental orthodoxy, not without its usefulness, which nevertheless has not in modern times enjoyed very much authority or prestige among us. Anglicanism has, of course, an ethos and history of its own, which, despite our many irritations and our characteristically strong vein of self-criticism, are dear to our hearts. Nevertheless, Anglicanism has no dogmas, doctrines, or creeds of

its own. We do not possess or even desire, a religion of our own, doctrines of our own, creeds of our own, a church of our own, or even a ministry of our own. Very humbly, and yet greatly daring, we desire to inherit nothing except the whole inheritance of the Church of God. Our appeal is to the Fathers and to the basic orthodoxy of the relatively undivided Church of the first five centuries. That basic orthodoxy we dare to make our own and to regard its authority over us as absolutely final and decisive. It is because of this basic orthodoxy that the unhappy revival of hopelessly outmoded heresies by the liberals and modernists who have made their home among us seems to us to belie and betray the essential character of the Anglican Communion. As we read books by people like Dr. Major or Bishop Barnes or Professor Pittinger, or light journalistic essays in breezy heresy by Bishop Pike, we feel ourselves plunged into a fourth or fifth century situation reborn well out of due time. Whereas all we ask for is to be Catholics now and to bear our Catholic witness in the midst of a twentieth century situation. However great their sincerity and their ability, these and many other similar writers

cannot help us here. They must remain for us the great surd, the supreme irrelevance, a misconception of the whole purpose and task of Christian thought in our time which, because it cannot survive in an atmosphere of living orthodoxy, buries itself and dies in the heavy clogging soil that clings to the corpses of the dead heresies. Orthodoxy is rooted in the past, for in the past as in the future, the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit. But unlike theological liberalism, orthodoxy is not immured in the past. The face of orthodoxy is turned towards the future, even while it stretches out its hand to grasp the present.

But if Anglicanism will have nothing to do with heresy, it is equally true that it will have nothing to do with Protestant deviation either. We are committed not only to classical orthodoxy, but also to the chronic continuity in the Church of liturgical expression, personal prayer, and credal and prophetic witness. Without heresy, without deviation, let us walk in the way of the fathers of the faith, for this we know is the way which is informed by the *truth* and culminates in the vision and enjoyment of the *life*.

A Pastoral View of Sin

• *Robert F. Capon*

Reading the masters of the spiritual life sometimes sets off an unfavorable reaction. Even the most appealing writers among them seem not only to have gotten our number, but to have gotten it too easily, at the price of some of the mysteries of personality. We almost resent the clarity, the facility, the unpoetic coldness with which they peel away motives, ignore overtones, and lay an icy finger on the heart of the matter. They seem unconcerned with all that is humanly deep and wonderful—with all that might be said for the indescribable beauty and complexity of man's perceptions and intuitions. For all their skill, they appear content to be anatomists of sin, and not poets of human nature. Indeed, there are moments when we would rather trust one George Herbert or Gerard Manley Hopkins than a hundred Jeremy Taylors or William Laws, and, within reason, it is not wrong to allow some free rein to the cavalier within us. But on the whole, our pastors have loved us at least as faithfully as our poets, and a word in justification of the pastoral view of sin may perhaps be in order. For after all, it is not the spiritual writers who have destroyed the mysteries of personality, but the sins about which they write. The flatness and predictability of our lives come from our faults; contrary to the common notion it is vice and not virtue that cramps our style; and a little

time spent in trying to understand why may be helpful.

Take, for example, a woman of some depth as she kneels in confession. She has perhaps tried to conquer her neighbour's husband with looks, or her own with sulks, and she now resents the way these things look when laid before the pastoral eye. They are not only cheap; they are also trite, flat and predictable. Her sins have painted her life a dull gray, and her religion makes her look at it. In the commission of them she had hoped, more or less consciously, to add a mysterious fascination to life, or at least to lend it spice or interest; in the result she finds she has lost depth, not gained it. She has lessened and worsened herself by the very effort to exalt and enlarge herself, and she wonders how she could possibly have missed what she pursued with such unerring aim. How indeed, except that she went about it in a way that was intrinsically impossible? For when we sin—when we take up the frantic effort to assert our own selfhood—we are forced to labor under a crippling disadvantage. In order to magnify herself in a conscious way, our penitent must of necessity come to some conscious conclusion about what she is and wants and needs. In short, she has first to create an image of herself, and then to will that the image be expressed in act. But this is very dangerous business. All she has to work with is her own mind—and that is a crippling disadvantage. Of all the people on God's green earth who might lay some claim to an accurate knowledge of her "true self," she is perhaps the least reliable. Her friends' knowledge of her is

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very sketchy indeed; at best it is only tentative. But her knowledge of herself is worse: it is not only incomplete; it is warped. Small wonder then that she finds the poetry of personality rather hard to read in the cold light of the confessional. For in each of the occasions of sin which she has confessed, her personality was only as deep and mysterious as the particular narrow-gauge notion of herself that she could get into her own head at the time. The habits of a lifetime and the compromises of the day conspired effectively to blind her to her real interests; and forgetting the hinted wonder that God infallibly meant her to be, she settled for the fallible but comprehensible substitute of what she herself thought she was. To be sure, all our actions are done on the basis of some consciously or unconsciously held estimate of ourselves, but what happens when we sin is that we actively seek to confirm and establish that estimate as the final truth. In other words, when we sin we create ourselves in our own image, and the consequences are always disastrous. For when that happens, the true and splendid self—the particular image of God, still all but unborn, which He intended for each of us from the beginning—goes by the boards, and our own presently flattering, ultimately fatal notion of what we are is set up as an idol and worshipped.

This is perhaps why the growth of the mystery of man's selfhood is described in Scripture in terms of the *fruit* of the spirit, and why the tearing down of it is called the *work* of the flesh. In order to do a *work*, you need a plan. If you cannot develop some comprehensible mental picture of what is involved in the work, you will not get it done, except by accident. A man cannot intentionally do a work that is outside the scope of his mind. To make a Chippendale chair, for example, a man must have mastered not only cabinet making,

but also woodcarving and upholstery. His best hope is to have his mind so furnished with knowledge that it is equal to the work. Should he, however, lack one or more of the requisite arts, he can only hope to complete the work by cutting it down to his own size: by putting, for example, uncarved feet on the chair. A *work* requires not only patience and attention; it demands comprehension of everything involved. By definition, therefore, no human work can ever exceed the limits of the human mind. A *fruit*, on the other hand, makes far less stringent demands on our comprehension. To grow an apple on a tree requires absolutely no knowledge of how to form the apple itself, or of how to make a tree. It demands patience and attention to be sure, but it demands comprehension only of the art of caring for fruit trees. In return for the comparatively minimal effort involved in fertilizing, pruning and spraying, we get the noble result of a crop of apples. In other words, in the case of something produced not as a work but as a fruit, we are in the position of being no more than a fostering influence, a preliminary or disposing cause. Our basic intention, of course, is to get apples, and all we do is done for the sake of apples, but our actual work in no sense makes the apples. It has to do mostly with saws and sprays and manure; the apple tree is so ordered as to take care of the rest. And we are content to have it so. We do not complain that if we can't create an apple directly we'll find something we *can* make. On the contrary, we accept our inability to master the *work* of making an apple, and are pleased to foster it as a *fruit*.

And so it is in the spiritual life. Sin is a work; virtue a fruit. The one is an effort to bring forth the divine product of human individuality by fallen human efforts and with no more light than is afforded by fallen human comprehension; the other is a careful tending of that individuality, dis-

posing it to receive the virtue abundantly poured forth by the divine giver of gifts. As in nature the tree takes care of producing apples provided it is tended, so God the Holy Ghost infuses virtues provided He is obeyed. We are, in the spiritual life, very much in the position of preliminary or fostering causes; we do certain relevant things which we more or less partially understand in order that the ultimate fruit which is now quite unimaginable to us might become a reality.

Note the last point well. Ultimate virtue is very often really unimaginable to us. If we are able to conceive it at all, we almost always misconceive it, and end up striving after something less than virtue itself. True, we are not ignorant of what the various virtues are, nor often of what needs to be done to attain them, but in the chaos of fallen human nature, that knowledge is not enough. The sinner seeks happiness; he may even seek joy. But because what he actually seeks is only what he has unwisely chosen to call happiness—only his fallen notion of what joy is—his life is a parody of what God meant it to be. It is utterly useless, for example, to tell the ordinary mortal to try to be more loving, or joyful, or to have more peace in his heart. It is precisely his frantic effort at what he calls love that has gotten him into all the sticky sentimentalities, possessive attachments and sensual compromises that have plagued his life. And it is his very trying to get what he thinks is joy or peace that has led him to an inebriate immersion in the world, or to a self-pitying divorce from it. Only God has an adequate idea of what is

really involved in human virtue; man lost the possibility of adequacy in the fall. And without that he must despair of achieving perfection as a work. Of its parts and adjuncts he may have some understanding, of the finished whole he must necessarily remain ignorant. If it is attained at all, it will be as a fruit, not a work. The only cause sufficient to produce it is the sanctifying grace of God the Holy Ghost Himself. Thus Eliot's admonition:

"I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope

For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love

For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith

But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting

Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought;

So the darkness shall be light, and the stillness the dancing."

Therefore, the life of the virtues—the only life capable of satisfying man—is God's work, not ours. Our business is the waiting, the tending, the obedience. We have suffered too badly from the effects of the fall to be able to take up arms directly and bring forth the needed results. But with patient submission to His will, He will do all things needful and in His good time form us after His heart. If we will only stop working so hard at what we think we want, He will raise up in us what He knows we need; if we will stop trying to cut our nature down to our size, He will lift it up to His.

Bultmann and Christianity

• Charles Don Keyes

It is probably no exaggeration to say that Bultmann now dominates the German theological situation to almost the same extent as Karl Barth did a quarter of a century ago. His influence outside Germany is also, perhaps, equally strong. To most observers Bultmann seems to represent a recovery of that liberal Christianity to which Barth and his followers had dealt such heavy blows. This impression is perhaps not entirely fair. Bultmann could claim that his existentialist approach to the problems of his time distinguishes him very sharply from the more or less Hegelian liberalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and that he is characterized by a zeal for the preaching of the Gospel, also interpreted, of course, in a highly existentialist manner, which unites him profoundly with the historic Lutheran tradition. There is some truth in this, but nevertheless, even though we allow that Bultmann represents a more definitely evangelical and Christo-centric liberalism than his predecessors, it is also true that he represents many of the same motives and tendencies. Thus a critical examination of Bultmann's views is important if we are to know precisely where orthodoxy, and for that matter liberalism, stand today.

The purpose of this discussion is to offer a critical evaluation of Bultmann's position using his idea of demythologizing as the concept in terms of which his system is to be understood. He writes, "What a primitive mythology it is that a divine being

should become incarnate, and atone for the sins of men through his blood."¹ The reason for this failure to comprehend the objectivity of the Incarnation is obscured and not clarified when we ask what Bultmann means by myth. As this discussion progresses we shall notice something of the ambiguity of his understanding of mythology, but for the moment Bultmann's primary definition seems to be that "mythology is the use of imagery to express the other-worldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life, the outer side in terms of this side."²

Myth and Analogy

Understood in this way, the purpose of demythologizing is to release the *kerygma* from the myth so that the *kerygma* may speak to man in his present situation, as Bultmann understands it. To release the *kerygma* is to provide something of an existential interpretation, but in a moment we shall see that there are differences between demythologizing and "existential interpretation." Also demythologizing seems to carry with it the implication that the "mythology of an out-dated world" which contains the *kerygma* is to be eliminated, or else modern man would be presented with an inauthentic stumbling-block. Whereas this stumbling-block, the myth, is dated, the *kerygma* is always vital, Bultmann would argue. But it seems that this definition of myth is so wide that it will include all analogical or symbolic language,

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¹*Kerygma and Myth*, p. 7.

²*Ibid.*, p. 10, n.2.

for "myth" thereby becomes such a comprehensive term that to denigrate myth is to deny the possibility of any type of reference to God, for it is in an oblique manner that we must speak of God. Myth for Bultmann also seems to become a heterogeneous term simply to designate a great number of things which share in common a supernatural quality, not only miracles but doctrines as well, including in the one category elements which are different in kind. But in an attempt to clarify what Bultmann means by myth Macquarrie wrote that Bultmann had included the primitive science within his broader definition, so that we are confused by the extent to which demythologizing implies the elimination of the primitive science and the extent to which it means something similar to existential interpretation. Macquarrie, however, attempts to construct what he believes Bultmann means by myth in the light of the various revisions made by Bultmann himself in view of such observations as we have made about the ambiguity of the definition of myth, and he argues in behalf of Bultmann in this way:

First, we are told that we must distinguish between myth and analogy, for Bultmann, upon consideration of the fact that any analogy itself is included in his primary definition of myth, feels that the difficulty is overcome if we use the term "analogical language" to refer to God's acts, for the analogy is with the human act. But to speak of God in concepts drawn from nature and not action, he believes, is to speak mythologically. Still, in that Bultmann's definition of analogy uses the word *vorstellen* (represent) we are convinced that it is impossible to avoid all pictorial images. And there is also the possibility that the symbol may be analogical in one context and mythical in another, and it is evident that Bultmann feels that

his difficulty is overcome if he can only transpose the matter of analogy into *act* rather than *substance*. This idea that act and substance are to be thought of in radical distinction re-appears in various levels of Bultmann's thought, and in the course of this investigation this will be shown to be one of the most serious errors of this entire frame of mind.

The second distinction which Bultmann's revised definition of myth involves can be passed over very quickly. It is the distinction between mythology and "quasi-myths," for myths properly speaking belong to the ancient world, it is thought, although they have a certain kinship with modern ideologies which, although they are not called myths, are called "quasi-myths." The third distinction is a much more significant one, the distinction between myth and legend. This distinction is *à propos* the confusion caused by classing different kinds of happenings, doctrines, etc., all according to the same category, i.e. myth. According to this distinction, "myth" is a term used to refer to the central Christian doctrines, Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, etc., whereas "legend" is a term used to refer to the "peripheral stories" which surround the central "myths," and according to Bultmann one of these is the Virgin Birth. The fourth distinction is between mythology and cosmology, and it was made by Bultmann in reply to Macquarrie who claimed that he had used the word "myth" in the double sense which has already been mentioned. Bultmann replied thus to Macquarrie: "You make the objection that I talk of myth in a double sense. But if I call the Babylonian cosmology a mythological one, I do so because originally the idea of heaven and of the underworld was not the idea of a primitive science—(It is) a mythological expression

of the thought of transcendence."³ However, are we really to assume that men of the ancient world understood their "mythology" in a merely symbolic sense without also at the same time believing that it had a necessary correspondence with the world of fact? It seems that Bultmann claims that they did precisely this, but this raises serious questions about Bultmann's understanding of the nature of objectivity, and much that is said in the following discussion will be concerned with this problem.

Aside from this, what are we to conclude about the nature of Bultmann's definition of myth, considering the distinctions which have been made and seeing that the primary definition given at the beginning is in need of being qualified? We conclude that the concept of myth is still ambiguous, but we also conclude that all of these definitions and qualifications are predicated upon an inappropriate separation of the *kerygma* from the occurrence. Although Bultmann believes that it is only in this separation of the *kerygma* from the image that the Resurrection, for example, is made real since it confronts men with the possibilities of human existence and brings them into a new self-understanding, nevertheless this very abstraction of event or *kerygma* from occurrence is another serious error of Bultmann's system. And it is the opinion of the writer that this swallowing up of the factuality of the elements of the Christian revelation into an abstracted eschatological event renders it impossible to understand how "saving events" can actually be saving if they are not factual as well, for we live in a world of facts as well as events and our total being embraces both, and our total being is in need of salvation. Moreover, is it possible

for an "act" to be true in any sense unless it has a necessary relation with fact? It is possible that the errors in Bultmann's position which have been noted thus far—namely the radical separation of substance and event, the separation of event and occurrence, and the confusion about the nature of objectivity—are all functions of the same basic defect, a failure in metaphysics.

Demythologizing

But before this observation can be elaborated it is first necessary to understand another basic distinction which is involved in the concept of demythologizing, the distinction between demythologizing and existential interpretation. They are to be distinguished from one another in three ways:⁴ First, demythologizing is a more restricted term than existential interpretation because the former is directed only to those parts of the New Testament which are considered to be mythical, and according to Bultmann the moral teaching of the New Testament is not mythical and yet it must be interpreted existentially. Second, there is a difference in the manner of interpretation, for existential interpretation takes place, according to this view, whenever a text is understood as disclosing a possibility of human existence. Here Bultmann would distinguish between "existentiell possibilities" and "existential possibilities." In the former there is reference to a possibility of an individual in a concrete situation, but demythologizing goes beyond this and deals with "existential" (as opposed to existentiell) possibilities, namely the horizons of human existence in general, and it involves concepts which the existentialist philosopher uses to analyze the structure of man's being as he conceives it.

³J. Macquarrie, *The Scope of Demythologizing*, p. 212.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 15-18.

Third, and most significant, demythologizing, but not necessarily existential interpretation, displays a radical skepticism towards any objective understanding of the stories it is interpreting. In this light it is possible for an existential interpretation of the Scriptures to be in accord with the orthodox faith of the Church if, in speaking of the possibilities of human existence (existential and existentiell as well), it regards the objective and transcendent grounding of the faith. But this cannot be said to be true of demythologizing, for it precludes objectivity. Moreover, to demythologize is to define the authority of Scripture in the light of existentialism, it seems, for here we can find a reflection of the perennial problem of Protestantism, its inability ever to be able to tell why the Bible is the Bible.

Bultmann's Theology

Having spoken of the concept of demythologizing itself, we turn now to the matter of seeing this concept in the context of Bultmann's theology. Bultmann understands theology to be what we might describe as a phenomenological description of faith, and this is related to his existentialism if we consider existentialism as an analysis of the understanding of existence which is given itself, for Bultmann says: "The right philosophy is quite simply that philosophical work which endeavors to develop in suitable concepts the understanding of existence that is given with human existence."⁵ We should notice at once that existentialism, interpreted thus, does not intend to understand the essential character of that existence as the most significant task of philosophy, and perhaps existentialism's claim that existence is prior to essence is related to its misunderstanding of the significance of objectivity. But the

existentialists believe that human existence is confronted by the various possibilities understood subjectively. G. W. Bromiley writes that

The basic nonobjectivity, however, is matched by nonobjectivity of understanding. If the record is not an object in its own right, neither is the event recorded. The real reconciliation is not effected in the first century Palestine; it is only represented. The revelation of God has not taken place; a mere mode of communication has been established. The new life has not come in the Resurrection; a mere sign has been given. The pre-eminence of Christ, his representative work, objective justification, faith in him—these are only a manner of speaking—Here is a subjectivism which subverts and destroys the Gospel.⁶

Or we may characterize the general bias of this type of existentialism in another way: Although existentialism is in a certain sense a reaction against the earlier Liberalism, particularly in regard to the shallow optimism of the earlier period and its facile "rationalism," in the case of Bultmann it retains somewhat the same reaction to miracles which characterized Liberalism. Likewise this frame of mind has a historicizing bias, and it re-asserts in new form the old nominalist errors in its claim that existence is prior to essence. In such a manner and by removing the "offensive mythology" the existentialism of Bultmann speaks to modern man, but it also remains conformed to the thought of modern man.

Heidegger's Influence

If we are to understand how Bultmann derives his notion of demythologizing we must consider his thought together with that of Heidegger. As Macquarrie observes, Bultmann and Heidegger clearly share two basic considerations. The first of these is the *Fragstellung*, the "putting of the

⁵*Kerygma and Myth*, p. 152.

⁶*Christianity Today*, Mar. 27, 1961, p. 543.

question," which means that to a certain extent the way a question is asked will influence the answer which is derived. As we should expect the *Fragstellung* here is not the question of objectivity or essences, but it is the question which pertains to man's existence understood subjectively. Thus the *Fragstellung* which Bultmann uses in his study of the Bible is the question of human existence and not the Divine Existence except so far as God is significant to man's existing. Thus a demythologized understanding of St. Paul's conversion would be that he gained a new self-understanding, or secondarily that he gained a new understanding of God. Second, Bultmann and Heidegger share another basic presupposition; this we shall term *Begriffllichkeit*, in the broadest sense the system of categories, the basic formal concepts by which we understand that which confronts us in experience. Every inquiry has a *Begriffllichkeit*, a context of ideas expressed in its terminology, and we are to use the appropriate *Begriffllichkeit* to accomplish our end. It is argued that the traditional *Begriffllichkeit* of Western philosophy with its concern over substance is inappropriate to the subject of human existence, for it is feared that the traditional philosophy will objectify man, that is consider him with studied detachment as the natural scientist would do. Instead of using those categories applicable to nature, new categories are to be used, and Heidegger calls these new categories appropriate to the understanding of existence which is given with existence "existentials," and Heidegger's *Begriffllichkeit* is reflected in his definition of man as "Being-in-the-world," not in the spatial sense of the word "in" but in the existential sense, for man is bound up with the world.

We see this notion reflected in Bultmann's treatment of St. Paul's theology, for example, because he writes that we must

understand St. Paul's anthropomorphic trichotomy as possible ways of being in the world and not in any substantial sense. Moreover, Hebraic thought is then identified with the existentialist understanding and Greek thought is associated with the "static substantial" understanding. And it is argued by Bultmann's followers that the tradition of Western philosophy with its substance orientation is at once alien to the existentialist frame of mind and the Biblical-Hebraic tradition as well, for it is argued that the Western philosophical tradition thus oriented is adapted to the study of the objects of nature (*Vorhandenheit* to use Heidegger's own term) whereas the Hebraic element of the Bible alone is adapted to theology as "recital," for the theology of existence does not objectify-depersonalize man but is concerned with individuality and the unique, and each man is to be understood as a completely unique individual who stands in need of a radical decision. But it is at this point that we are able to understand the error in Bultmann's conception of objectivity. He has it confused with the scientific type of objectivity, whereas the true objectivity in traditional theology is the objectivity which asserts the essence of things, their purpose, their meaning as God sees them. Even at this are we really able to deny that scientific objectivity has nothing significant to say about man's existence? On the contrary, science deals with actual objects and these are significant to man's existence. But more than this, to deny objectivity in the sense of essence is to deny metaphysics. Yet to deny metaphysics is to assert metaphysics, for to say that we cannot understand man's existence metaphysically is to make a statement which is held to be true objectively as pertaining to the structure of meaning in the universe. It also seems that Heidegger and Bultmann exert considerable effort saying that it is man's nature not to have

a nature, and their philosophy which claims to analyze human existence fails to analyze existence as rational, for this is surely one way of being in the world, or at least we are led to think that rationality is a way of being in the world if we are to make statements which are held to be true in an objective sense.

Heidegger feels that we are to speak of man's existence in two ways: We may speak of it *ontologisch* (ontologically) or else *ontisch* (ontically). In the former sense our concern is addressed to being and the range of the possibilities of a thing, but in the latter sense we are concerned about an entity in its actual relations with other entities. Still every ontic statement does have ontological implications. If we say, for example, that A is B, this is to imply that A has the possibility of being B, i.e. the being of A is such that it can be B, and for this reason we can see Heidegger's insistence that the need to investigate the ontological assumptions of all ontical inquiries is reflected in the distinction which was made earlier between Bultmann's program for demythologizing in relation to existential interpretation. Also, Heidegger argues that in order to understand man's existence we are to do more than understand it as *existentia* in the traditional sense, i.e. to be extant, as he understands it, for to do this is to consider man in the sense of *Vorhandenheit*. Against this term Heidegger poses *Dasein* as the proper term to describe man's existence, for to say that man exists, *existere*, is to say that he *stands outside* the world of things, that he is more than an object, for he transcends the subject-object relationship since he is both subject and object to himself. But to say that man is *Dasein* is also to say that man is possibility, that his being is never complete at any moment, wherefore Heidegger claims that he has no essence as an object does because he can never be described

as an object is, but he can be described only in terms of his possible ways of being. The failure to treat man's rationality as one of his ways of being is to be seen, however, in connection with Heidegger's failure to treat man's experience of continuity as an expression of a continuing essence as he moves through new possibilities.

Here we are able to see the words *existentiell* and *existential* in context. The practical possibilities of *Dasein* are the former, whereas his wider possibilities, horizons, are the latter, and the investigation of these is the subject of the existential analytic of *Dasein*, and to describe these possibilities is to engage in what Heidegger believes to be the legitimate investigation of man, and this is a phenomenological task. It involves an ontological description, and not an ontical one, for this is the description which a scientist would give, but the ontological or phenomenological description directs itself to a descriptive analysis of what is revealed to *Dasein* in his own self-disclosure as existing. We have seen that, according to Heidegger, man has two fundamental possibilities in the world, inauthentic or authentic existence. Man is in the former condition, it is believed, when he becomes merged in the world and becomes an object to himself and thereby understands himself as one subject among others in the world. But his condition is authentic when man, instead of being enslaved to the world, is free within it. Bultmann interprets *soma* in this light, as a way of being in virtue of which man is in the world, and he elaborates this: Man's existence is always somatic, even in the life to come. *Soma* is not a substance, Bultmann declares, but a way of being, for it means that man is in the world and confronts two fundamental possibilities, he is either (1) at one with himself or (2) estranged from himself. The natural body

and the spiritual body in Pauline theology are therefore to be understood existentially and not substantially, for they are ways of being in the world and also in the world to come, Bultmann believes. Ontically there is a difference between the present world and the world to come, for the world to come is one wherein man will be estranged from himself, be split within himself. Ontologically, however, the continuity is preserved. This interpretation does not seem altogether objectionable until we realize that it is presented by Bultmann in the same context of thought which is involved in demythologizing, and this means that we will be unable to think of the world to come as an actual objective existence. This seems, once again, to reduce the matter to one of the ways of being, subjectively interpreted.

In this we see evidence of the man-centered bias of this frame of mind, but we also see the same bias in another way as well. According to Heidegger, we are to consider the pragmatic entities of the world as *zuhanden* rather than as *vorhanden*, which is to say that they are immediately present to our concern, as a result of which the world becomes a subjective system to serve *Dasein* in his practical concern. Such concepts as space and distance therefore are not to be conceived geometrically, for this would be to abstract them, it is believed. Instead we are to conceive them existentially, that is conceive them in analogy with the system of instruments so that space, for example, is considered as a system of places. Such a conception of *zuhanden* is involved when we encounter the world as authentic persons, but when we encounter it as inauthentic men we lose ourselves in it and it becomes, no longer a system of instrumentalities, but a threat. In this light Bultmann is able to distinguish a two-fold significance from the word *ktisis* in Pauline theology. It is either for

man (I Cor. 10:26) or else it is hostile to man (Rom. 8:22), and man has the possibilities of encountering it either way.

We meet somewhat the same result when we consider the knowledge of God as existential. We can properly speak of God, it is insisted, only as a result of the experience of faith, and theological knowledge must be from the inside, for just as man cannot be described objectively, neither can the knowledge of God, Bultmann insists. But he feels that there remains the possibility of a phenomenological analysis, and if applied to theology it would mean the description of the self's experience of God through faith. This experience of faith carries with it an even greater certainty than scientific knowledge, for it is involved in its own certainty, because this type of understanding is one of the possible ways of being. As we have seen, according to this frame of mind, it is an existential and not a theoretical understanding of the world which is given with existence, for a theoretical understanding would lead, if we applied it to theology, to the "speculative God of metaphysics." And in an attempt to avoid such concepts as substantiality, we are told that the concept of the world as an instrumental system precludes such notions as substantiality and causality as significant to an existential understanding of the world, for just as pragmatic entities are arranged in a system of instrumentalities man also projects (*Entwurf*). Bultmann applies these views of Heidegger by claiming that in Pauline theology (Rom. 12:2) the word *nous* does not mean theoretical understanding in any sense, but instead he says that it means willing, doing.

Existence as inauthentic and as authentic are the two fundamental possibilities of *Dasein* according to Heidegger's philosophy, as we have seen. Existence may be said to have three basic characteristics,

and possibility is one of these, but two more are also elaborated, although they are related to the characteristic called "possibility." One is "facticity," *Faktizität*, but in existentialist thought this does not mean objectivity as in reference to a scientific fact. It is the "givenness" of a situation, and this givenness determines possibility to an extent, as Heidegger writes: "An entity of the character of *Dasein* is there, in the sense that, whether explicitly or not, he finds himself thrown (into existence.)"⁷ *Dasein* is thrown into existence and this in part characterizes what we mean by facticity, which is also understood as individuality, that is *Jemeinigkeit*. The third basic characteristic of existence, of *Dasein*, besides possibility (inauthentic or authentic existence) and facticity (thrownness and individuality) is "fallenness," a dreadful word, *Verfallenheit*, and it has two aspects, the fall into the world when the self identifies with it and also the fall into collectivism. In this way man falls away from himself, and this observation about man's condition constitutes what Heidegger calls an ontological, not an ontical, judgment. It is in the light of these characteristics of existence (that is to say facticity and fallenness) that we are able to understand the fact of man's *Sorge* (care) and his *Besorgen* (anxiety). In Bultmann's discussion of man under sin, of how he loses himself, and in the analysis of *sarx* and *hamartia*, we see a direct reflection of the same existential analytic which Heidegger uses, and he equates St. Paul's "natural man" with inauthentic existence. It seems unnecessary to discuss more fully the characteristics of anxiety in Heidegger's and Bultmann's thought except to say that it is in Heidegger's terms an "ontological" not an ontical consideration primarily, and to say that it is related to the manner in which *Dasein*

loses himself in the world and is turned into an object. It is at this point once again that we see evidence of the misunderstanding of the nature of objectivity.

The transition from inauthentic to authentic existence, according to Bultmann is made by means of conversion, which constitutes a new understanding of the self, wherein the self projects itself on new possibilities. If we speak ontologically, these new possibilities are thought to be present already, but if we speak ontically we are aware that the fallen condition of man has lost the existential possibility of true existence, it is claimed. Therefore the *kerygma* is necessary and faith is the proper response by which conversion is possible. We let Bultmann speak for himself at this point in a statement which summarizes much that we have said about his thought up to this point:

Faith is nothing other than the answer to the *kerygma*, and this is nothing other than the Word of God addressing to us, questioning and promising, directing and pardoning. As such it does not offer itself to critical thought, but speaks in concrete existence. That it never appears except as a theological exposition depends on this, that it can never be expressed except in a human language formed by human thinking. But that is precisely what confirms its kerygmatic character; for that makes it clear that the propositions of the *kerygma* are not universal truths, but are addressed to a concrete situation. They can therefore only appear in a form which is moulded by an understanding of existence—And correspondingly they can only be intelligible—Expressed differently, the *kerygma* is only intelligible as *kerygma* when the understanding of the self which it has awakened is understood as a possibility of man's understanding of himself in general, and so becomes the call to decision.⁸

⁷*Sein und Zeit*, p. 135.

⁸*Theology of the New Testament*, I, p. 235 f.

It is in this way that Bultmann believes he is able to relate his theology on the one hand to an existential analytic of man's condition and on the other hand to God's action. As we have seen, the *kerygma* is what Bultmann understands to correspond to the latter. *Kerygma*, it is claimed, has two elements, grace and revelation. Grace is not thought to be a special quality of God, but an event. However, we ask, what event? Bultmann's answer is that it is the "mighty acts of God," "God was in Christ," and it is this action which comes from outside the human condition, restoring lost possibilities as it lives in the proclamation and the consciousness of the Church. But the *kerygma* also provides revelation as well as grace. Like grace, revelation is an event, man's self-understanding as he sees himself in relation to God, and in this notion Bultmann intends to say that there can be no natural theology. As we know, Bultmann does not believe that the *kerygma* offers itself to logical thought, but in addition to this, as we have already seen, it is to be separated from the myth which is used to express it in order that the myth will not become a stumbling-block to modern man. It seems that we have here almost a *gnosis*, almost a docetism, for the kerygmatic truth is abstracted from the occurrence and then is held to be sufficient in itself. Hegelianism had done something like this in its time, holding the pure idea to be sufficient apart from the actual occurrence which expressed the idea. Hegelianism, despite its errors, at least maintained the metaphysical significance of its abstractions. Bultmann seems to deny both occurrence and metaphysical significance as well.

A Special View of History

Bultmann's understanding of events must be seen in relation to his view of history.

We have already mentioned that "care" comes about because of the special character of possibility, facticity, and fallenness. These may be considered to correspond to the future, present, and past aspects of time respectively, but in man these three aspects of time may be brought together, but this reconciliation is thought to take place in the light of a particular concept of history. History is not *Historie* but it is *Geschichte*, as in Heidegger's thought. This means that history understood as *Geschichte* shows man to be its existential subject, that history is not an objective accounting of happenings or things, but that it is related to the existential analysis of man's possible ways of being, for it cannot be thought of in the light of a scientific (and to the existentialists this means "objective") study. The existential study of man in history might be called the "primary historical" whereas the objective side of history, which the existentialists think is not actually related to the primary historical, can be called the "secondary historical," as it is by Heidegger. Bultmann argues that the world of the New Testament is "three-storied," that it contains elements of the secondary historical, and although these elements do provide the background for the saving events they are not really meaningful today. In fact the process of demythologizing must disentangle the primary from the secondary historical and thereby present men with the events of God's action which lives only in the proclamation, not objectively. The New Testament, Bultmann believes, contains three elements all interwoven with one another. These are myth, objective-historical elements, and existential-historical elements. An example of an objective-historical element is the phrase "—suffered under Pontius Pilate—," but when we regard the mighty acts of God as

objective events or objective historical happenings they cease to be saving events, writes Bultmann, who is not even concerned with the objective-historical understanding of the Resurrection, for this is thought to be mythical, but its significance, he believes, consists in that it is existential-historical. We see that Bultmann's failure to consider reason as one of man's ways of being in the world is accompanied by the failure to take seriously man's objective involvement in history. The observation that history is to be seen existentially, internally, is indeed a valuable insight, but it is absurd to separate this internal aspect from its external references. The same may be said for the matter of event, which cannot be separated from its actual concrete references. To commit this abstraction of the event from its concrete references seems to violate one of the main elements of the Hebraic tradition with its concern over the actual. But in addition to this it seems that the view which draws such a radical separation between the Hebraic and Greek elements in Christianity is predicated upon this very type of abstraction.

An Existential Problem

Macquarrie claims that in Bultmann's thought, once the myth has been translated into existential statements there is even then an over-plus which is transcendent and cannot be reduced to the language of existence. What is this transcendence? It is the activity of God beyond existence. Here perhaps, if Macquarrie is correct, at the last moment, as it were, Bultmann cannot accept the results of his own conclusions and holds together two inconsistent, or at least discontinuous, views: (1) the reduction of categories to those of the existential understanding of the self and (2) the affirmation that God acted in Christ. The assertion that God acted in

Christ is not necessarily an assertion of the orthodox faith, which claims not only that God acted in Christ, but that He acted in Christ by virtue of Christ's Divine Nature. But the statement that "God acted in Christ" in Bultmann's theology is evidence that even he cannot escape some degree of transcendence, even if it means holding it within his system in utter discontinuity. It is discontinuous because he fails to appropriate this transcendence throughout his system and because God's transcendent action has no necessary connection with actual occurrence. And since there is thought to be no necessary occurrence the result is subjectivism even when he asserts God's action. He agrees that "God was in Christ" and yet he writes that

The formula "Christ is God" is false in every sense in which God is understood as an entity which can be objectivized whether it is understood in an Arian or Nicene, an orthodox or a liberal sense. It is correct if "God" is understood here as the event of God's acting.⁹

What remains, then? We are left with a philosophy of existence in terms of which the New Testament is to be understood, reducing it to subjective categories, rejecting any possibility of their connection with actual events or with metaphysical interpretation, and we have an abstracted conception of "transcendent" event, a conception which is both in discontinuity with the other elements in the Bultmannian system and a conception which by virtue of its abstraction seems utterly inadequate to meet the existential situation presupposed by the context of the system out of which it developed. How an event can be separated from occurrence is not understood by the writer, for it offends not only metaphysical judgment but also it offends a dictum of common sense. More important

⁹*Kerygma and Myth*, p. 27.

it is impossible to forbear to say with St. Paul: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." And it is necessary to add that

if Christ be not risen indeed existence is also vain, for we cannot authentically preach a "Risen Savior" who did not actually rise.

Book Reviews

A Study of Hebrew Thought, by Claude Tresmontant (translated by M. F. Gibson). New York: Desclee, 1960. pp. 178. \$3.75.

One approaches this recent study by Claude Tresmontant with mixed feelings. It is known from other sources that he is a competent student of many things; but judging from the present volume—which is indeed only “a sketch, a blueprint. . .” (p. ix)—and from his work, *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, His Thought* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1959) it becomes evident that, along with keen insights and undoubted talent for synthesis, there remain a number of areas in which mere acumen falls short and synthesis has been something less than successful. The attempt at coming to grips with a metaphysics of Hebrew thought, with a warming over of Bergsonian concepts, give the impression that there are basic problems not yet adequately sounded out by the author.

The basic question of a metaphysics of Hebrew thought deserves a more thorough investigation. While the author rather successfully and understandably sidesteps metaphysics in his book on Chardin, mostly because Chardin limited himself out of the problem, Tresmontant spends much time and energy in this volume on uncovering “the main lines the organic structure of a metaphysics, which is truly, though implicitly, contained in the Bible” (p. ix). It is—to this reviewer—unfortunate that Tresmontant attempts mixing oil with water, trying to give the oil a water base, even if it is only “implicit.” While one can certainly find elements common to both traditional metaphysics and Hebrew thought, there are hardly two more diverse ways of “thinking.” And though the author cites Plato and Aristotle, he evidently means after their baptism at the hands of scholastics, both mediæval and neo-. It is common knowledge, especially since the profound ground-work of Heidegger (from whom such people as Tillich get their Ground of Being and most of their critique of intellectualism in theology) that there was no Greek metaphysics, conceived in anything like a systematic form, or conceived at all. Metaphysics about which Tresmontant speaks

is mediæval and neo-scholastic philosophy, with liberal admixtures of *élan vital*, which in this case seems more akin to a philosophical pep-pill than anything else. The great synthesis of the mediæval period, about which Christopher Dawson so justly rhapsodizes, was the work of an era unafraid of creativity and color. But in our day it has often sunk to the level of schoolbook psitticism, so that just about anyone can talk glibly and self-assuredly on *unum*, *verum* and *bonum*. Certainly the author does not commit any such indiscretion; nor would he be happy with the label of neo-scholasticism. Yet much of his thinking is unwittingly colored by it. Neo-scholasticism at its best and wisest is a serious attempt to cope with the problem of new-and-old, a problem which will remain insoluble until more thorough studies are done on the concept of time. At its worst, neo-scholasticism is merely a guarantee that we can live off borrowed capital without investing very much ourselves, beyond giving it an occasional dusting off. The great struggles and brilliant conclusions reached by the productive minds of the era will have become for us merely handy formulas which we can feed into a ready-made thinking machine, and then simply go on forever cranking out syllogisms. The living flesh of a dynamic tradition, the *basar*, the *sarx*, has become merely a dressed up corpse, for which one buys a new suit of clothes from time to time under duress of contemporary vogue.

It would be far beyond the scope of this review to outline the reasons why anyone treating of metaphysics under any aspect, and neglecting even to mention the titanic work of Heidegger, is exactly thirty-four years behind the times (*Sein und Zeit*, 1927), and essentially out of touch with perhaps the most important work on metaphysics that has been written in this century. Certainly a Heideggerian *Sprung* (cf. *Satz vom Grund*) would be of more help in this case than any number of *élans*. In fact, the *Sprung* springs right over and beyond any conceivable *élan*, because it gets right at the Ground of things in a way no other philosopher has done since Kant. In a short review it would be imprac-

tical and impossible to mention the tremendous contributions of such men as Husserl, Heidegger and Jaspers, and also of Eugen Fink, one of the few people who writes convincingly on Heideggerian thought. It would certainly be rewarding for Tresmontant to read at least Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, *Was heisst Denken* and *Satz vom Grund*. He would also find Bergson's philosophy put in proper perspective and would discover a more adequate philosophical approach to the very problems he grapples with. He would have to go to the Ground, to the roots of things, instead of skittering pleasantly (and fascinatingly!!) among the branches, many of which are deadwood in drastic need of pruning.

The "concept" (also a Platonism—being a structural pattern of "ideas" which one can then "embody" in words!!) of creation, for example, is not biblical but quite mediæval, even though *bara* is taken to mean an action of God alone (cf. p. 17f.). According to Tresmontant, God creates and man fabricates. But reading the idea of creation into biblical thought is indeed a fabrication, philosophical and otherwise! Even though the idea of a "pre-existing void" or of chaos, as a disorder preceding creation, is sidestepped; although matter as a principle *ex qua* is avoided, the explanation of the meaning of creation and of nothing goes only half-way (cf. p. 39f.). In the very attempt to deny traditional concepts of nothingness, he again does not escape a creation *ex nihilo sui et subjecti*. The fact that he does not adequately distinguish, as does Robinson, between *neos* and *kainos* demonstrates this to an extent. Creation is called "the real invention of new being" (p. 35), "a constant elaboration of the absolutely new" (p. 22). This would indeed be something *neon*, but not *kainon*, which is rather the renewal of the "old." Despite the evident insights into Hebrew thought, Tresmontant cannot escape westernisms, and is not aided very effectively by quotations from Bergson. One gets the idea that both he and Bergson have emerged from western thinking, only to find they give themselves away—like American tourists wearing Arab keffiyehs over their loud sport-shirts in Jerusalem, Old City. For an effective approach to the problem of nothingness, if we must bring in a philosopher, let us call in Heidegger, his *Was ist Metaphysik?* The concept of creation, even though Bergsonized and

Chardinized, still bears much history on its back, mostly mediæval. The idea of creation certainly does not go back to Plato or Aristotle, because the Nothing and Something, and the Same and the Different of scholasticism and modern philosophies is not necessarily that of the Greeks, except as "seen in a mirror and uncertainly."

A more satisfactory "synthesis" of philosophy and Hebrew thought—if such a synthesis must be made—could be made from the viewpoint of phenomenology. At first this might seem strange. But one need only read Heidegger (who has departed considerably from Husserl and is not an "existentialist") to learn of his original insights into pre-Socratic thinking. We would find striking similarities between Hebrew thought and the thinking of Heraclitus. But we would not put them together in a *pasticcio* type of synthesis. Rather we would go beyond both Hebrew thought and Heraclitan thinking back to common sources and perhaps, using the terminology of a linguistic scientist like Sturtevant, back to a proto-Indio—"European." At any rate, we could consider Hebrew thought and Heraclitan philosophy as two similar branches coming from a common trunk. We find the definition of man, of thinking and acting very similar. We also find that both concur in considering man as one being, not as an ensouled body, or embodied soul. We would find that the central "concept" of Heideggerian thought is the *logos*, but we would be unable to agree with him on his rather disparaging criticism of the Johannine Logos, which re-presents the Hebrew *memra*. It was Harnack who claimed that John was influenced by Greek philosophy in his elaboration of the Logos concept. There was doubtless an influence—who can use the Greek word and escape its forceful history?—but not as described by Harnack, not the influence of Philo Judæus. In all of this we go back to the trunk and the roots of the tree. This does not mean that in order to get to the roots we must cut the tree down and deny all further developments. The branches are also a part of the tree, but often they lose contact with the life-giving sap that comes only from the roots. If so, they die, bear no fruit and must be cut off for the health of the rest of the branches. "The Church assimilates" (p. 176). This is true. It grows. But lest the growth be untimely, the branches may

need a timely pruning. "Denn es hasset der sinnende Gott unzeitiges Wachstum." (For the watchful God scorns untimely growth.) (Hölderlin.) "Untimely growth" is *akaios*. Our God, who watches, will indeed provide that *en kairo* the tree be dunged about and pruned, that it continue to bear fruit. Perhaps the restlessness of our contemporary creative minds is what Karl Adam calls the "restlessness of the Holy Spirit" and perhaps those most in danger are the ultra-orthodox, whom Karl Rahner calls crypto-heretics, because their orthodoxy consists mainly in an indifference to the truth. If this be so, then it is they who must fear lest they be cut off from the tree and cast into the fire, because the tree is a growing and living thing. And life cannot give birth to death. Tresmontant recognizes this problem and acquits himself admirably. His book is a fresh breath on a close summer day.

More successful than his approach to a metaphysical synthesis, is the authors' discussion of the Platonic body-soul dichotomy, which like the poor is always with us, it seems. This problem is handled with even more precision by J. A. T. Robinson (*The Body, A Study in Pauline Theology*, 1952). Tresmontant points out with considerable skill to what an extent our western thinking habits differ from the Hebrew and N. T. In the foreword to this book, Osterreicher points out that Aristotle wrote of *to empsychon soma*, in order to counteract, at least implicitly, the Platonic idea of dualism. Without being able to go into detail on how Aristotle reached this terminology, we might say the same of him that we can say of all later attempts, even by scholastics: the very fact that a frantic attempt is made to put things back together again only reemphasizes that they have broken apart. Moreover, Christian mediævalists made sure that the *anima* could be used separately in a number of ways, even as they insisted that it was the *forma corporis*. It was a curious day in the history of philosophy when Plato pushed Humpty Dumpty off the wall, because since then not all the king's horses and all the king's men have been able to put him back together again! From Plato we get the division of man into soul and body, a very un-Hebrew idea. It is also a very un-pre-Socratic thing to do, as Heidegger points out. From this fateful day on, philosophers and theologians have spent most of

their time trying to piece things back together, with more or less success. Since Plato, we speak of idea *vs.* the sensible, mind *vs.* matter, idealism *vs.* realism, and with the help of mediævalists (and later, Descartes) we speak of subjective and objective! We deem ourselves learned when we call this subjective and that objective, and even more so when we speak of intersubjectivity, little realizing that this distinction is a recent one, and that the pieces were put back together again into the unity they always were as *hypokeimenon* and *antikeimenon*: that-which-lies-at-the-ground, as lying-against, i.e., the Ground-manifesting-itself. It is One, not our problematic Two; or inter-Two!

In Hebrew thinking there is no Platonic separation between *basar* and *nephesh*, as the author skilfully demonstrates. Accordingly there is no dualistic difference between the *sarx/soma* and the *psyche* of the N. T. (Robinson points out that the *soma* is the "body"-made-for-God.) Tresmontant has a special chapter on the *pneuma* (Hebrew *ruah*) and throws considerable light upon the interpretation of the phrases "spiritual," and "physical body." The former is *pneumatikon*; the latter either *psychikon* or *sarkikon*, both having the same meaning: living flesh. Yet, while taking us to task for opposing body and soul in our common usage, the author also betrays his own western origins when he says, "Indeed we should not say that man *has* a soul, but that he *is* a soul" (p. 94). Again: "And so it is written: the first man Adam was made a living soul. . ." (p. 111). In both cases the *psyche zosa* (Hebrew: *nephesh hayya*) translated as living soul, is expressed in a word that is western rather than Middle Eastern. Emphasis is placed on the very word that the author has severely criticized. It is the emphasis, as Robinson points out, not of a Hebrew but of a Greek. *Psyche zosa* should be translated *living man* or *living flesh*.

It is impossible to give a critique of everything discussed by Tresmontant. In general one can say the book is well worth reading, if one is willing to keep one's tongue in cheek, especially when getting a treatment at the hands of Bergson. Since this book has been but a sketch and blueprint—and a fine one at that—perhaps its author might now specialize on a chapter or two and do *in intenso* what he has done so well *in extenso*. Only then will the book read to the satisfaction of any-

one who has gone into similar and allied studies, both philosophical and otherwise, especially philosophical studies of the calibre of Heidegger and E. Fink.

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The Loss of Unity, by Hoffman Nickerson. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1961. pp. viii, 360; 21 s. net.

"Another book on the Reformation" may be your first reaction. Once you open the volume, however, you will find difficulty in laying it down. It is distinctly readable, yet without sacrifice of scholarship. The absence of footnotes does not mean absence of erudition. The author moves with a sure grasp of his subject, both in its main outlines and in its details. Whether in dealing with the statecraft and ecclesiastical policy of Charles V, or the "unemployed diplomat," Machiavelli, and the unsettling element which he added to the "yeasty ferment of the time" in furnishing a cynical governing class with a talented defense of aggression by force and fraud, or the "Dutch scholar who laid an egg," Erasmus, or the "Gothic gaiety" of Rabelais, or the fulminations of Luther, or the efforts at reform within the Church, the writer is as thoroughly at home as he is in his description of the sailboats of the Viking period or his comparison of them with those of Columbus or of our own time.

While the author makes no secret of his own Anglican and Catholic convictions, he strives for fairness toward all the chief characters and parties concerned. Perhaps his principal weakness in this respect is in dealing with Calvin, "the Devil-worshipping genius," and Calvinism. What is said here needs to be checked and balanced by the study of such a work as Dr. John T. McNeill's *The History and Character of Calvinism*.

Throughout the book, one feels the author's keen sense of the tragedy of the destruction of the religious unity of Western Christendom and the appalling disasters that have accompanied and followed this. Tribute is paid to the Christians of the Reformation age who strove to avert the tragedy—not least the Emperor Charles V and his brother Ferdinand—while at the same time, the passions and forces—not always or chiefly religious—which made their task so nearly hopeless, are clearly depicted. A hopeful note is struck in the final chapter: "Armistice Line and Unhealed Wound." It is refreshing to find a serious and eirenic approach to the problems both of division and unity, which does not begin with pan-Protestant premises and end in pan-Protestant or pseudo-Anglican conclusions, richly reinforced with doses of Rousseauistic sentimentality and untrue truisms. It is good to know that an American edition (Doubleday) will shortly appear.

WILLIAM H. DUNPHY

Correspondence

Dear Father:

Let me join in the general acclaim for the splendid new Quarterly. As you invite correspondence, I raise a point that may or may not be of some importance.

Toward the beginning of Fr. Talley's brilliant paper in the first issue of the *American Church Quarterly* there is a puzzling aside: "the ubiquity of secularism (the bitter fruit of the Edict of Nantes)."

It is hard to see how that Edict (1598) could be responsible for secularism. In granting certain permanent rights to the French Protestant community, it did indeed reveal a considerable crack in the wall of the mediaeval City of God. But its terms were not original. In fact they were less generous than those Charles V had already conceded to Protestants within the Holy Roman Empire by the Peace of Augsburg (1555). Edict or no Edict, the synthesis of Justinian and Charlemagne had been wrecked all across Europe by the Reformation.

Mention of the Edict of Nantes brings to mind the dismal period of the French wars of religion that preceded it. Beginning with the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572) when 4,000 French Protestant leaders were murdered in their beds (the Spanish ambassador wrote his King: "While I am writing they are killing them, stripping them naked, dragging their bodies through the streets, sacking their houses, not sparing even the children. Before noon today they have killed three thousand of them. Blessed be God!") until the issuing of the Edict of Nantes, France had been bled white in internecine strife, each side prosecuting its cause with diabolic energy and incredible barbarism. Having changed his religion, and fought his way to Paris, Henri IV at last, contrary to all expectation, entered into his heritage. At that juncture he had no choice. Either he and France would be destroyed, or a *modus vivendi* between Catholics and Protestants would be found. The

Edict of Nantes saved France. It amounted to a treaty with the Protestants, giving them the right to exist, to hold office, to worship in certain delimited areas, to defend these rights by force if need be. It did not permit them to evangelize. Nor did it give any ground to indifferentism in religion. The French Catholic Church retained its status unimpaired. Its clergy were still the First Estate of the realm. Henri IV may have been moved with some sympathy for his former co-religionists, whose valor had brought him to the throne; whatever his motives, the Edict of Nantes was a rigorous political necessity. The usual view is that it was a good thing as well, marking some progress in the humane, not to say Christian, treatment of heretics.

By the same token, the *Revocation* of the Edict of Nantes (1685) has been productive of secularism, cynicism, and atheism. Although the Edict had been solemnly sworn to as eternally irrevocable, in the seventeenth century its provisions were progressively dishonored by the State. In 1685 that egomaniac, Louis XIV, egged on by his Jesuit confessor, Père La Chaise, and by his new wife (his mistress of many years' standing), Mme de Maintenon—one of the most narrow-minded female tyrants ever to control a modern nation—proclaimed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in the name of piety. All France and Europe knew how to evaluate the piety of that trio. Decent people were shocked and disgusted by the brutality with which penal provisions against the Protestants were carried out. Though the border was closed, half a million Huguenots escaped into exile, where their commercial and cultural abilities proved a priceless boon to Holland, Switzerland, Germany, England, and the American colonies. The revulsion in France against Louis XIV and the Church was so great that indifference and unbelief took deep root, and are still general there. Bitter fruit, indeed.

(THE REV'D) R. J. BUNDAY
Marshfield, Wisconsin



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